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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	91125615
Party	Plaintiff UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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Date	01/10/2006
Attachments	NOR 7.pdf (107 pages)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA,

Opposer,

v.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

Applicant.

Opposition No. 91125615

Serial No. 75/358,031

Mark: **SC (Stylized)**

Filed: September 16, 1997

Published: May 18, 1999

**OPPOSER'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE NO. 7
ON PRINTED PUBLICATIONS FROM 2005**

Opposer the University of Southern California ("Opposer" or "California") hereby introduces into evidence by this Notice of Reliance articles from various periodicals published in 2005. The attached evidence demonstrates that California continues to be widely referred to in articles as "SC" as a means of identifying California in oral as well as written contexts. In other words, these articles not only demonstrate that the press and public widely refer to the University of Southern California as "SC" but they do so frequently in a verbal form (*i.e.* as if spoken using the letters "SC").

A party to an inter partes proceeding before the Board may introduce printed publications, such as periodicals and books, available to the general public in libraries or of general circulation among members of the public as part of its evidence in the case by means of a notice of reliance. 37 C.F.R. § 2.122(e) and TBMP § 704.07. In lieu of the actual official record, the TBMP also provides that an electronically generated document (or copy thereof),

which is the equivalent of the official record, such as a NEXIS printout, may accompany the notice of reliance. *See* TBMP § 704.08.

Attached as Opposer's Exhibits 193 - 222 are true and correct copies of the following articles or NEXIS printouts from various periodicals from 2005:

Opposer's Ex. No.	Description
193	01/06/2005 article from the <i>Chicago Tribune</i> entitled "Southern California by any name national champ"
194	01/06/05 article from <i>The Boston Globe</i> entitled "Carroll Enjoying the Ride"
195	September 2005 article from the <i>Southwest Airlines Spirit</i> entitled "No Guarantees"
196	09/16/05 article from the <i>Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (Little Rock)</i> entitled "Venerable venue Coliseum home to Trojans, myriad of memories"
197	09/17/05 article from <i>The Advocate (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)</i> entitled "Brotherly love? Florida-Tennessee rivalry loses spice"
198	09/24/05 article from the <i>Daily News</i> entitled "Willingham vs. Weis highlights college weekend"
199	09/27/05 article from the <i>Bucyrus Telegraph Forum (Ohio)</i> entitled "There have been lots of best evers"
200	09/28/05 article from <i>The Detroit News (Michigan)</i> entitled "Lions defend alma maters; Even though they're pros, they still pledge allegiance to colleges and talk a good game"
201	09/29/05 article from <i>USA Today</i> entitled "Ariz. State faces huge challenge"
202	09/30/05 article from <i>The Houston Chronicle</i> entitled "USC's top-ranked juggernaut appears unstoppable; Abundant talent enables Trojans to overcome loss of offensive guru"
203	09/30/05 article from <i>The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)</i> entitled "Star QBS Earning Face Time: Devil's Keller Eyes His Shot to Dent Armor of Trojans"
204	10/01/05 article from <i>The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon)</i> entitled "Today's games: USC discounts ailing defense"

Opposer's Ex. No.	Description
205	10/03/05 article from <i>The Washington Times</i> entitled "Trojans are primed to be upset"
206	10/07/05 article from the <i>Hartford Courant (Connecticut)</i> entitled "No Small Feats; There Isn't Any Utah – Or Another Mid-Major – To Challenge BCS Structure This Season"
207	10/15/05 article from the <i>Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska)</i> entitled "Bears' bluster not all Wac(k)o"
208	10/27/05 article from the <i>Lewiston Morning Tribune (Idaho)</i> entitled "Trojans' greatness difficult to compute"
209	11/11/05 article from <i>The San Francisco Chronicle (California)</i> entitled "Look for mighty USC to lay down the law against Cal"
210	11/12/05 article from the <i>Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, California)</i> entitled "Can the Cal Bears do it again?"
211	11/13/05 article from the <i>Fresno Bee (California)</i> entitled "Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't pass for ancient history to those who witnessed it on the sidelines"
212	11/13/05 article from the <i>Daily News (New York)</i> entitled "Fab Frosh Spark USC"
213	11/16/05 article from the <i>Marin Independent Journal (Marin, CA)</i> entitled "Dave Albee: Harris deserves credit for Stanford turnaround"
214	11/17/05 article from <i>The Miami Herald (Florida)</i> entitled "Some college football capsules and picks"
215	11/22/05 article from the <i>Fresno Bee (California)</i> entitled "Hill bullish over future; Coach says USC game indicative of how team's expectations have grown"
216	12/01/05 article from the <i>Daily News (New York)</i> entitled "QBS Fight for L.A. Bruins' Olson Targets Leinart"
217	12/03/05 article from the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> entitled "Crosstown Rivalry; Rah, Rah – Boo, Hiss; In the run-up to today's USC-UCLA game, split loyalties among spouses, colleagues, even business partners lead to high jinks. All's in fun, right?"
218	12/07/05 article from <i>The New York Post</i> entitled "NCAA Grid Legends Are Backing Bush"

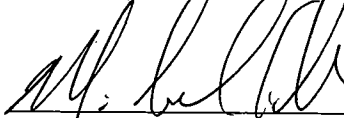
Opposer's Ex. No.	Description
219	12/29/05 article from <i>The San Francisco Chronicle (California)</i> entitled "Cal will find out how good USC is"
220	12/30/05 article from <i>The Denver Post</i> entitled "Longhorns not only Herd at Rose Bowl"
221	12/30/05 article from <i>The Sporting News</i> entitled "Twas the night before the offseason"
222	12/30/05 article from the <i>San Antonio Express-News</i> entitled "Lost in the lights"

As the pages attached as Opposer's Exhibits 193 - 222 are thirty (30) articles or NEXIS printouts, and the contents are not reasonably subject to dispute and are moreover capable of immediate and accurate determination, the requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 2.122(e) and TBMP § 704.07 are satisfied.

Dated: January 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER, LLP



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University of Southern California

3 of 3 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2005 Chicago Tribune Company
Chicago Tribune

January 6, 2005 Thursday
Chicago Final Edition

SECTION: SPORTS ; ZONE C; In the wake of the news. ; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 638 words

HEADLINE: Southern California by any name national champ

BYLINE: Mike Downey.

BODY:

Sure enough, there it was. I picked up my morning paper, looked at the sports page and there it was.

"Orange Bowl: Southern Cal 55, Oklahoma 19," read the headline.

"Southern Cal quarterback Matt Leinart playfully rubs the head of coach Pete Carroll," read the photo caption.

"Southern Cal claimed its 11th national championship," read my buddy Teddy Greenstein's game story.

"Southern Cal's dominance," read a portion of my pal Rick Morrissey's column.

Yep, there it was, our coverage of a school's second consecutive college football national championship.

A school that doesn't exist.

There is no such place as "Southern Cal."

I do not know a lot, but I do know this: According to school records, there are approximately 180,000 living alumni of the University of Southern California. There also are 4,300 current faculty members, 7,800 employees and 31,000 students.

Not a half-dozen of whom call their school "Southern Cal."

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the University of Southern California's founding. And for a number of years now, school administrators, alumni, staffers and students have made it abundantly clear that the name of their institution of higher learning is not "Southern Cal."

They gladly will answer to any of the following:

Southern California, USC, SC or Trojans.

But the sound of "Southern Cal" is a fingernail scratch on a blackboard to any USC man or woman. It is an insult, an epithet. It is a slur used only by those with no regard for the university's wishes.

USC's athletic department officials politely and repeatedly have asked the media to refrain from using "Southern Cal" in any reporting. You might notice that when Keith Jackson or any similarly respectful TV sportscaster works a USC game, at no time will he utter the words "Southern Cal."

My late sportswriter friends Mal Florence and Allan Malamud, each a member of USC's Hall of Fame, took great umbrage with anyone who insisted on calling their beloved school by that annoying name.

Southern California by any name national champ Chicago Tribune January 6

They reacted the way Benjamin Siegel, the gangster, reacted when anyone dared to call him "Bugsy." It was one of two things: A sign of ignorance or a deliberate slap in the face. I do not know why media outlets continue to provoke USC this way.

Is it because we have been doing it since the 19th Century and are too set in our ways to change? Or is it because if we say USC won an Orange Bowl, mixed-up readers will take it to mean the University of South Carolina?

I was thinking about this Tuesday night while watching USC stomp Oklahoma 55-19.

With the game in progress, my good friends Greenstein and Morrissey communicated to me that "Southern California" in a story had been changed to "Southern Cal."

After the game, it happened yet again: Southern California was written, but it was shortened in the paper to Southern Cal.

I happen to believe people or places should be called whatever they wish to be called. But here at the Tribune, apparently, Muhammad Ali is still Cassius Clay.

OK, fair is fair.

You tell me TV star Courteney Cox of "Friends" fame prefers to be known as Courteney Cox Arquette now? Hmmm, sorry, Court, no can do. In my paper, you will be called Cox and like it.

A tsunami hit Thailand and Sri Lanka? Not necessarily. I like the old names of Siam and Ceylon a whole lot better, so let's call them that.

Oh, and see you at the 2008 Peking Olympics.

TNN is now Spike? Nahhh. Not to me. Mike doesn't like Spike.

I'm simply an ordinary guy who hopes that the Baltimore Colts will be able to win the Super Bowl and that Tiger Woods can take the Bing Crosby Clambake.

As for college basketball's national championship, go Texas Western.

Familiar old names really are the best, I guess.

Don't mind me. I am nothing but a crabby old pencil pusher, flabbergasted by the way Southern Cal's southpaw signal-caller chucked that pigskin on the gridiron.

LOAD-DATE: January 6, 2005

Copyright 2005 Globe Newspaper Company
The Boston Globe

January 6, 2005, Thursday THIRD EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. E1

LENGTH: 983 words

HEADLINE: CARROLL ENJOYING THE RIDE

BYLINE: BY BOB RYAN

BODY:

MIAMI - You are who you are, and so when the awesome deed was done - no one foresaw 55-19, either way - and his second national championship was in the books, Pete Carroll knew it was time to party hearty.

"We had a beautiful night," the Southern Cal coach reported at yesterday's bright-and-early Orange Bowl media post-mortem. "It was Mardi Gras right there at the Diplomat. We had a beautiful time, families and kids and coaches all dancing together and having a wonderful dinner together, the kind of a celebration that this kind of event game warrants. I challenged them not to go to sleep until the sun came up, and I made sure that was the way it happened. So we get to sleep on the way home."

It is so nice to see Pete Carroll in his element. He hates to hear this, but the cold and cruel world of the NFL was really not for him, and if he answers the phone when the 49ers call, his wife should take out the commitment papers. It's amazing that he spent 16 of his 53 years on this earth resisting his true calling, which is to be with kids, counsel kids, be there for kids, and, as they say, to coach 'em up with all the vast football knowledge and feel that Pete Carroll possesses.

The very first sentence of his biography in the 388-page Southern Cal media guide sums up the Pete Carroll/USC marriage perfectly: "It took energetic and enthusiastic USC head football coach Pete Carroll only three years to return the glory of the Trojan football program and return Troy to national prominence."

Next season they'll have to adjust this to reflect back-to-back national titles in years 3 and 4 of the Pete Carroll Trojan era, after Tuesday night's romp over No. 2 Oklahoma. And there may be more coming. Our boy Pete really has it going at SC.

Carroll's NFL "problem," if you want to call it that, was never football. This guy knows his football. He's an X's and O's man of the highest degree, and he was a very good defensive coordinator for both the Jets and 49ers.

No, his "problem" was his personality. His failing is an essential decency and enthusiasm package that just doesn't have the same effect with guys drawing paychecks as it does with college players, and that includes those who assume they will be drawing paychecks in the near future. Perhaps this is a vague and inadequate presentation of the Pete Carroll personality "problem," but I believe it to be real and I think it is nothing to be ashamed of. To the contrary, it is something that he should be proud of. Is it more important to be remembered as an effective take-no-prisoners coach or as a tremendous human being who also happens to have a lot of football knowledge to impart?

Carroll may have been perceived to be "soft" with his NFL players, but he is anything but with his college players. He has the capacity to be demanding and humane at the same time. His basic approach is anything but fuzzy-wuzzy or sentimental. You know, for example, how some college coaches structure the entire program around paying homage, tribute, and respect for the upperclassmen? That is not the Pete Carroll way. His way is the best Trojan plays, be he fifth-year senior with 30 career starts or true freshman with none.

If you wish to be a Pete Carroll Trojan, you'd better be prepared for some spirited survival-of-the-fittest competition, and that means everybody.

CARROLL ENJOYING THE RIDE The Boston Globe January 6, 2005, Thursday

"Our program is built on competition, and it's part of the way we think," he explained. "There's another guy just champing at the bit to take your spot, and if you don't perform well . . . I made it a big deal last spring that John David Booty was going to challenge Matt [Leinart] for his spot at quarterback, and I meant every word of it, and we gave him 50/50 reps throughout the springtime to see if he could do it, and Matt held him off."

This Rooney kid must be pretty good if Carroll was even remotely thinking about making a change. Leinart went on to win the Heisman Trophy, and in what may have been his final game as a Trojan he threw for 332 yards and five touchdowns in the national championship game, all this without even throwing a pass in the fourth quarter. At one point the southpaw from Santa Ana, Calif., threw for TDs on three consecutive completions.

Carroll firmly believes in the need to keep things churning in an effort to forestall any complacency on the part of those who have already achieved. "We need to continue to bring in some kids that will push," he said. "The way we do it, the younger you are, the more opportunity you get, and we want to find out which kid can be a championship player for us as soon as we can possibly find it out. Spring football will be extremely important to the guys that are in the program, because we come back to fall camp and the new guys are going to get thrown in front of the lines. Our team knows how that works, and they have to compete around the clock just to maintain their position on the team, and without that constant competition, I don't think we can achieve this kind of level, and we're going to continue to do that."

And Pete Carroll is going to continue to be Pete Carroll, a man whose personal cruise ship has come in. "I have people tell me, 'Just relax,' " he said. "Don't tell me to relax. I'm having a freakin' ball. We get to do this for six months, be on top of the college football world. We likely have a chance at being the No. 1 team coming into next year. Shoot, that's awesome, awesome stuff. I don't want anything different than that. That's fine. I'll play some hoops and do a little boogie boarding and all that kind of stuff, but I don't want to get very far away from it. It's too much fun."

A lot of guys in his business know how to win. Very few know how to enjoy winning. They need to spend some time with Pete Carroll.

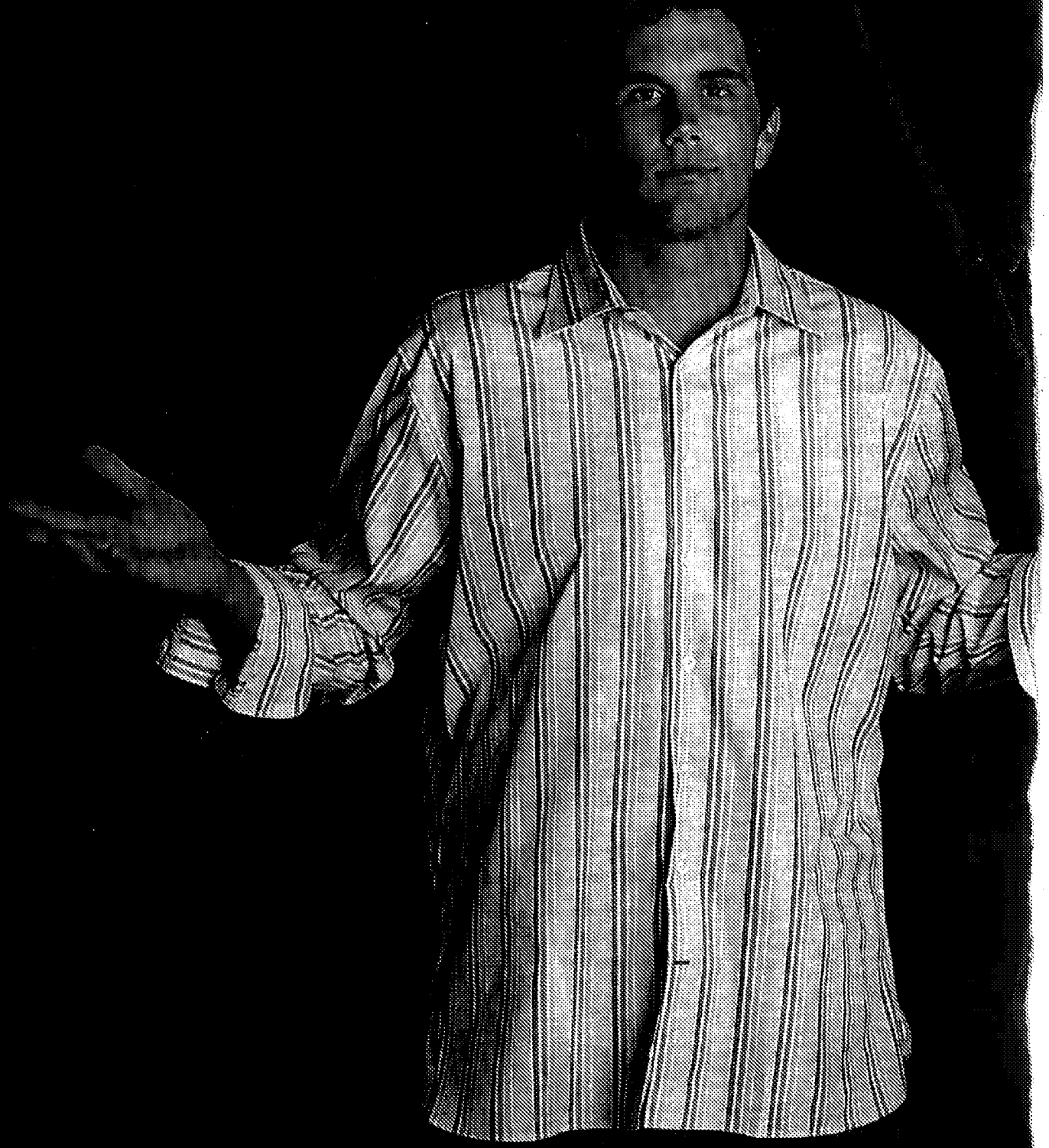
Bob Ryan is a Globe columnist. His e-mail address is ryan@globe.com.

NOTES:

BOB RYAN

GRAPHIC: PHOTO , He didn't have much to celebrate during his Patriots tenure, but Pete Carroll has poured it on since taking over at Southern Cal. / GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

LOAD-DATE: January 6, 2005





NO Guarantees

Quarterback Matt Leinart's decision to stay in school made him a hero in Los Angeles, put college football's biggest bull's-eye on his back and set up the most dramatic question of the new season—can USC do what no team has ever done? BY ASHLEY JUDE COLLIE

PORTRAITS BY VÉRONIQUE VIAL

SEPTEMBER 2005

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES SPIRIT 101

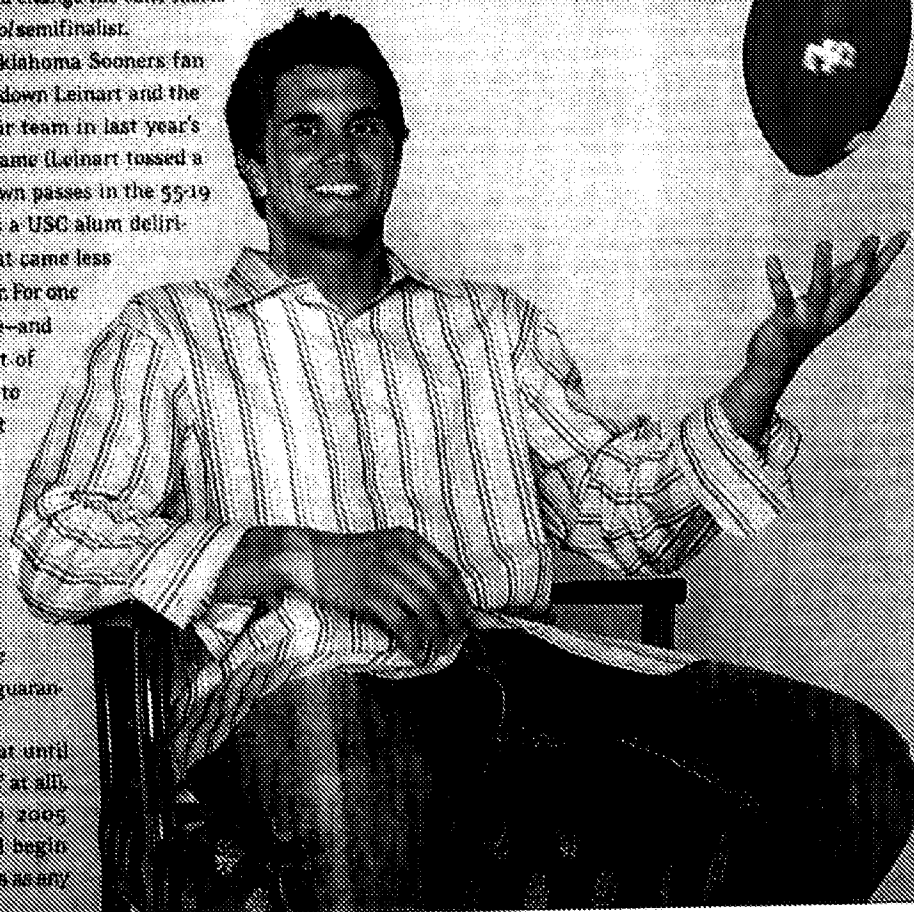
ure, University of Southern California senior quarterback Matt Leinart spent most of last season swearing that he wasn't going to turn pro in 2005. But even before the golden-armed Orange County native won the Heisman Trophy and led the undefeated Trojans to a national championship in last year's Orange Bowl, sports fans knew the score. Like every "student athlete" who pays lip service to the "college experience" and "importance of academics," Leinart was simply spouting the usual jock clichés. Put NFL millions in front of him and he'd change his tune faster than an *American Idol* semifinalist.

But for every Oklahoma Sooners fan stunned at the beatdown Leinart and the Trojans laid on their team in last year's Orange Bowl title game (Leinart tossed a record five touchdown passes in the 55-19 blowout), there was a USC alum delirious at the news that came less than two weeks later: For one more year of college—and a chance to be part of the first team ever to win three straight national Division I-A football titles—the 6'5", 225-pound sociology major did what almost none of us would have. He turned his back on guaranteed millions.

That means that until USC gets beaten (if at all, each week of the 2005 college season will begin with as much drama as any

in recent memory. Particularly on the West Coast. The Trojans' preseason goal is to win the Pac-10 conference and a trip to the Rose Bowl, site of this season's BCS national championship game, on January 4, 2006. At the moment, their chance at making college football history looks solid.

Spirit caught up with 22-year-old Leinart on the USC campus to talk about staying in school, the departure of offensive genius Norm Chow and exactly what kind of insurance policy a guy in his cleats takes out.



STYLING: LAUREN KILGORY FOR CHAN HAS AND MAKEUP BY KASHEE ELLIOTT

Let's get the decision out of the way first. You turned down a few million bucks so that you could do something you've already done. Some people said you were crazy.

I agonized over deciding whether to turn pro even on the morning of the press conference (January 14). Having the game I did in the Orange Bowl made it harder because there was a shot to go out on top. People said, "What else do you have to do in college?" When you hear that talk it kind of brainwashes you some. Doubts creep in. It was definitely the most difficult decision I've ever made. I woke up thinking, "Anyone would love to be in my position, but this sucks!" But my heart and gut always told me to stay. I feel no regrets. ▶

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What if you don't win it all again? Or have a lousy season? People say a bad season will hurt me. I don't see that. Hey, college football is competitive. It's hard to win every game. I'm not worried about playing badly or losing. I don't listen to naysayers. My teammates and coaches are my family. The most important thing in football is your family and blocking out everything else.

Are you concerned about getting injured? I could get hurt any day of my life. I don't live or play scared. The two positives to leaving were making money and fulfilling my dream of making the NFL. But there were more positives to coming back.

your footwork or arm strength. Another year of playing against top college teams, learning how to better read tough defenses, can only help me at the next level. Some thought I was stupid for staying, but these are things in the long run that are going to help me be an even better player. They may even speed up my progress when I get to the next level.

Are you still buzzing after winning the Heisman Trophy and then the national championship? There's no better feeling than being undefeated, a consensus number-one team, achieving all your goals and then celebrating with your team. That is indescribable. It's all been a blur. The

The two positives to leaving were making money and fulfilling my dream of making the NFL. But there were more positives to coming back.

Do you have an insurance policy covering an injury? We took out a million-dollar insurance policy for 2004. And we took out a bigger one for the upcoming year—not the reported 10 million, but a high seven-figure policy. Insurance policies are about expectation. If you're a projected first-round, top-five pick, you're going to get the most coverage.

The premiums are about \$20,000 for a million-dollar policy—rising proportionately—which seems like a good deal. You just pay out of your first pro contract, and it's win-win if you're a high draft pick. Because \$20,000 is almost nothing compared to what you can potentially make. Some guys are getting \$13 million signing bonuses. God forbid you get hurt, but it has to be a career-ending injury to get the insurance payout. That's where they get you because there's hardly any career-ending injuries going into the NFL.

Was staying also a matter of getting better prepared for the NFL? Physically, there's always room to grow, whether it's

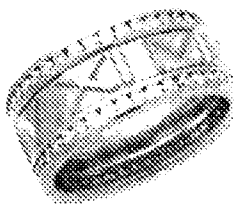
Heisman is the best you can get individually. Then walking off the Orange Bowl field, holding that trophy up. It doesn't get much better than that.

You guys scored four touchdowns in 10 minutes in the Orange Bowl. What was in that Gatorade? Nobody believed that was going to happen, let alone us on the football field. We couldn't be stopped in the second quarter. After they fumbled that punt and we scored on the next play, it was downhill for them. Coming off the field leading 28-7, I told Coach [Pete] Carroll, "They don't want this game. Their heads are down." It was a total team effort because their offense was real potent, but our defense shut them down.

What made you guys so dominant in that game? Where we had the advantage is that we had Coach Carroll and Coach [Norm] Chow, maybe the best defensive and offensive minds in the country. Any time you give them a month to prepare, I don't think the other team has a chance, to be honest. Oklahoma was probably more athletic than us, with more guys maybe going to the NFL. But with the coaching

JOHN & CHRISTIAN

DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN

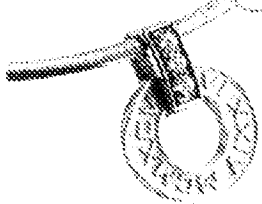


Anniversary Date

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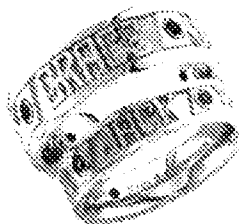
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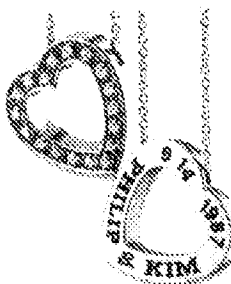
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and mind set we had going in--they were popping off all month, but we laid low and did our thing in the big game.

Did the Orange Bowl win make up for 2004, when LSU won the BCS championship and you guys won the AP championship? Yes, because we won it outright with no controversy and got to hoist the crystal ball. The year before, we were a little disappointed, but we still did everything we could possibly do. In our minds, we were national champions after our [2004] Rose Bowl win.

Would you like to see a playoff system for the national championship? It'd be fun, and a lot of people would love to see it, but I don't think it's going to happen. The bowl season is something real cool, although the system for the championship is not always good. It can be unfair--we experienced it; Auburn did last season. Something's going to have to change, but maybe not anytime soon.

Did the Sooners' trash talk--calling you "an overrated quarterback for an average offense"--motivate you? We laugh.



COMMAND DECISION

Since Leinart already made one tough decision--college or pro?--we got to know him better by forcing him to make a few more.

Rock or rap?

Probably more rap. Guys like Jay-Z and Kanye West. Plus? I like Green Day, U2, Linkin Park, Simple Plan, New Found Glory, Maroon 5. I like everything except heavy country music.

Gwen Stefani/No Doubt show or heavyweight title fight?

I love concerts, and especially Gwen, she's hot and from the O.C., but I've never been to a fight, so I'd take the live show. Can I go to both?

Hollywood or Venice Beach?

It's funny, but I've only been to Venice Beach maybe three times. I had my car going toward Hollywood, checking out the scene, as for the nightlife, I try to stay out of trouble, but there are many cool clubs in Hollywood, too.

(the House of Blues [8430 W. Sunset Blvd., 323 648-4000] for music.

Madden NFL 2005 or Halo 2?

Those are my two favorite video games. But I play Halo pretty much on a daily basis. We hang up about four rooms with three players to a room, so you've got, like, 12 players at one time.

Italian or Mexican?

I love Italian, but nothing lately. There's this place close to SC called Rustico Cafe [3017 S. Figueroa St., 713 745-8000] where I eat all the time. Another with one I love is Brioche Brioche Restaurant [1101 W. Sunset Blvd., 323 436-7000]. But being in Southern California you've got to try Mexican, so I recommend El Chapo Cafe [821 S. Western Ave., 323 744-0713].



TOP: G. HALL/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM: © JOHN MULLER/GETTY IMAGES

106 SOUTHWEST AIRLINES SPIRIT

SEPTEMBER 2005

Opposition No. B1125615
Univ. Southern California v.
Univ. South Carolina

Opposer's
Ex. No. 155 Pg. No. 5



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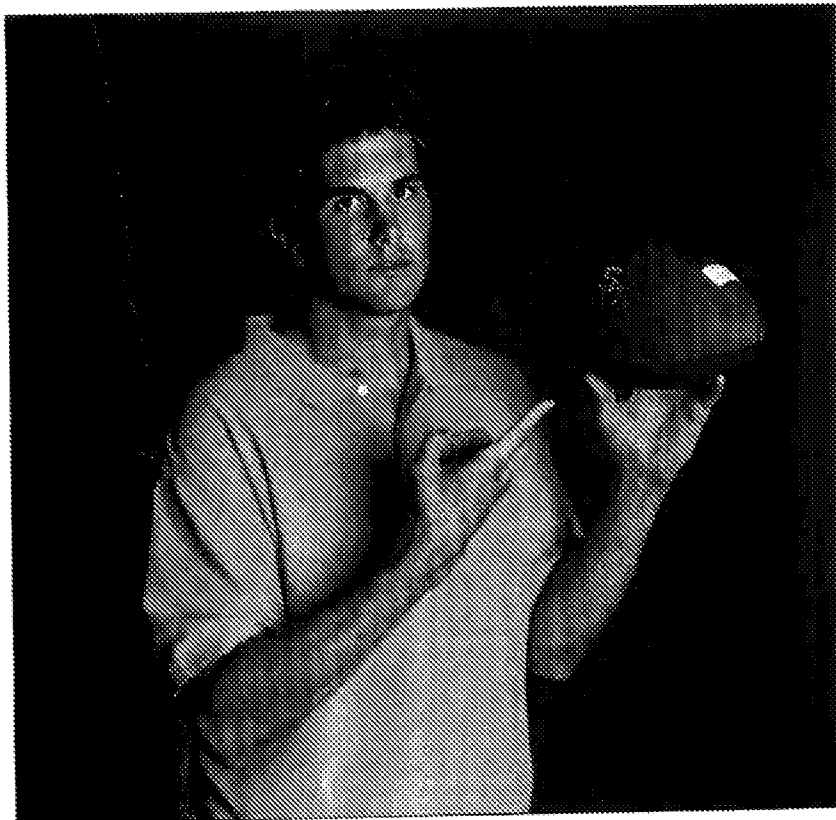
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at that kind of stuff. I didn't have any extra motivation. I was going to do my thing, and as it turned out, I had a big game. People talk every week, trying to get under your skin. But our record speaks for itself. We don't react; all we do is win.

Is that confidence or cockiness talking? Not to seem too confident, but our belief is so high, in a good way, that we expect to win every game. For all we put in, for what we've accomplished the last two years, that's our mind-set.

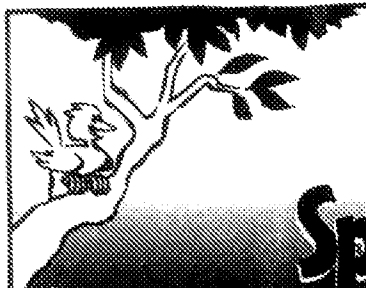
So, can we pin you down for a third-consecutive-championship prediction? Every year our goal preseason is to win the Pac-10 and get to the Rose Bowl. But this year, the Rose Bowl is the national championship game, hopefully my last college game. There'd not be a better way to celebrate it. But we (know) everyone is gunning for us.

Can we put this East Coast bias to bed once and for all and give the Pac-10 a little love? We don't get the respect we deserve. But it's kind of like, whatever, we handle our business. Every conference has three

or four teams that are very competitive and some not so good. So it's really unfair to say the Pac-10 is weak. I'm biased, but we beat Michigan and Oklahoma, the best teams in the Big Ten and Big 12, respectively. We beat Auburn from the SEC. I think we're going to get more respect.

How do you see the Pac-10 playing out this year? Cal has a great coach, and they're building something really good over there. I think Oregon is going to be tough. The top teams are SC, Cal, Oregon and Arizona State. Every other team, you never know, someone could surprise you.

How much tougher will this season be now that SC's brilliant offensive coordinator Norm Chow has gone to the NFL's Tennessee Titans? Change happens, but the philosophy and system here are going to be the same. With Coach Chow leaving, yes, I was a little disappointed. He's a great coach obviously, but we developed a relationship where we could talk about football, life, girls, school, anything. That was cool. Then me coming back, I didn't expect him to leave. But he



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got a great opportunity, and that's why I couldn't get mad. I'm happy for him.

Is head coach Pete Carroll more of a taskmaster or friend? There are guys who are good coaches, but who are like drill sergeants and real hard to talk to. Carroll has both elements. He can be serious, we respect him, but he's also like a kid with great enthusiasm. He loves the game, and that makes it fun to play for him. That's a key ingredient—you have to relate to your players, joke around, talk about anything. I've never seen anyone like him. He's a one-of-a-kind personality.

USC has had some great teams, but do you feel you're creating your own legend here now? Outsiders looking in see a dynasty winning three in a row. That potentially SC can be one of the greatest teams in this era, or ever. But we don't think like that. And if we ever did, our coaches would be the first to put us back into place.

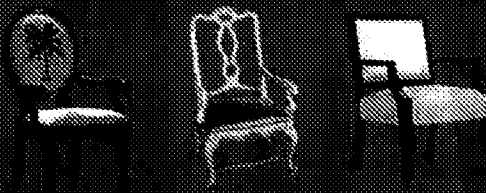
What's going to make you a successful NFL quarterback? The way I study and prepare. Quarterback is the toughest position. People sometimes get away with their natural ability. But I work hard and study, and then my natural instincts take over. Coach Carroll talks about this "it" factor. If you have it, you're a leader, you win, you don't make mistakes, you got it. Tom Brady has it. Peyton Manning has it. It's hard to explain. I really pride myself in being a leader on the team.

Is Tom Brady an NFL quarterback you particularly admire? I try to model myself after him. I think we have a lot of similarities. He's obviously done a lot more. But the way he goes about winning, being a leader, showing poise, not making mistakes—he's not the most physically gifted guy, but he's one of the most respected players because he just wins. Brady might not have Peyton Manning's stats, but I bet Peyton would trade them for just one championship ring. ☺

ASHLEY JUDE COLLIE IS A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO SPIRIT. HIS WORK HAS APPEARED IN MACLEANS, THE WASHINGTON POST, THE FINANCIAL TIMES, PLAYBOY AND BASKETBALL DIGEST.

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Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (Little Rock)

September 16, 2005 Friday

SECTION: SPORTS

LENGTH: 756 words

HEADLINE: Venerable venue Coliseum home to Trojans, myriad of memories

BYLINE: BY BOB HOLT ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

BODY:

GAME 3 Arkansas vs. No. 1 Southern Cal WHEN 9:23 p.m. Central Saturday WHERE Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum FAYETTEVILLE - The Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum has hosted Super Bowls, World Series and Olympics.

It's also been the home of Southern California football, from the time it opened in 1923, and it's where the Arkansas Razorbacks will play the No. 1-ranked Trojans on Saturday night.

"We play in great stadiums all the time in the SEC, and our stadium is great, too," Arkansas redshirt freshman tight end Marc Winston said. "But to play in a place like the Coliseum, which has so much history, will be special.

"It's a sports landmark for the United States."

USC, which won 63-17 at Hawaii on Sept. 3 and had an open date last week, will be playing its home opener Saturday night. A capacity crowd of 85,000 is expected.

"A lot of Hollywood people are probably going to be there," Razorbacks junior defensive tackle Keith Jackson Jr. said. "I'm excited about playing in that kind of atmosphere."

Keith Burns, a former Arkansas player and defensive coordinator, was a USC assistant from 1993-1997.

"When you're on the runway getting ready to go on the Coliseum field, you think about all the big events that have been held there, all the great athletes who have competed there," said Burns, an assistant coach at San Jose State. "Just the SC guys alone that have played there through the years is incredible.

"It is an amazing place. I think it will be a special experience for the Arkansas kids to play there."

SEC coaches who have played at the Coliseum in recent years said it has a loud crowd, but not as loud as some stadiums in the SEC.

"It's a little bit different environment [compared to] what Arkansas or what we are used to going into here in the deep South," said Auburn Coach Tommy Tuberville, whose Tigers lost to USC 24-17 at the Coliseum in 2002. "They are vocal, obviously, and [Trojans Coach] Pete [Carroll] has done a great job of turning that program around and winning consistently, and I'm sure their fans have gotten into it more."

Tuberville noted that the Coliseum, where USC has a 388-122-27 record, is an old structure and said the dressing rooms aren't very good.

"But it's one of those places you want to one day say you've had the opportunity to coach or play in," he said. "Arkansas' players will have a great time. It's a great trip and they're getting ready to play a great football team, obviously."

Venerable venue Coliseum home to Trojans, myriad of memories Arkansas De

In a change from previous years, beer won't be sold at USC home games this season. USC President Steven Sample has announced a ban on beer sales because of some fans' complaints about a rise in foul language and surliness. Sample said he wants a more fan-friendly atmosphere.

Beer will be sold near the Coliseum, the Los Angeles Times reported, at the intersection of Figueroa and 39th streets.

SEC stadiums also don't allow the sale of beer, but that never has stopped fans from sneaking it and other banned alcoholic beverages into games.

"I've never had a drink in my life, so I don't know about all of that," Burns said. "But going to a game at USC is more of a social event for people in Los Angeles. It has a different feel than an SEC game."

Kentucky Coach Rich Brooks faced USC at the Coliseum nine times during his 18 seasons at Oregon from 1977-1994.

"It can be warm and smoggy," Brooks said. "Smog sometimes plays a role."

"The breathing can be difficult out there. They don't have the humidity, but they've got the smog."

Burns said smog is a problem for Los Angeles in general, but usually not early in the fall.

"This time of year the weather should be outstanding," Burns said. "I don't think the Razorbacks have to worry about smog."

Arkansas Coach Houston Nutt said he believes the Razorbacks will be excited to play in the Coliseum, but not intimidated.

"I know there's a lot of history there, but playing in the SEC gets you ready for anything," Nutt said. "We're used to playing in front of 80,000 or 90,000 on the road."

Arkansas is playing at the Coliseum for the second time, but the first time in 32 years. On the Razorbacks' only previous visit, they lost to No. 1-ranked USC 17-0 in the 1973 season opener.

"The Coliseum is a historical place," Razorbacks defensive coordinator Reggie Herring said. "Hopefully, it will be a historical night for Arkansas when we play there."

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This article was published 9/16/2005

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 2005

Copyright 2005 Capital City Press
The Advocate (Baton Rouge, Louisiana)

September 17, 2005 Saturday
Metro Edition

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 2-D

LENGTH: 614 words

HEADLINE: Brotherly love? Florida-Tennessee rivalry loses spice;
SEC BOTTOM LINE

BODY:

OLE MISS (1-0) AT VANDERBILT (2-0), 11:30 A.M., VANDERBILT STADIUM (JP): The Commodores are suddenly a team to reckon with after opening the season with road victories at Wake Forest and Arkansas. Vandy is seeking its first 3-0 start since 1956. The Rebels slugged out a 10-6 triumph against Memphis on Labor Day and have not surrendered a touchdown in eight quarters. Senior QB Micheal Spurlock was effective for the Rebels, but has his work cut out against a Vandy defense that has been steady in the two wins.

LOUISIANA-MONROE (0-2) AT NO. 7 GEORGIA (2-0), NOON, SANFORD STADIUM: Now that the Bulldogs can exhale after their 17-15 nail-biter against South Carolina, the Indians don't figure to have too much fun on this road trip. Georgia is 18-1 against nonconference opponents under coach Mark Richt and 2-0 vs. ULM, with both victories coming in the 1990s. This is Georgia's final tuneup before a three-game road stretch against SEC foes.

BALL STATE (0-2) AT AUBURN (1-1), 1:30 P.M., JORDAN-HARE STADIUM: The Tigers are still looking for their identity despite a workman-like 28-0 win over Mississippi State last week. Auburn hasn't run the ball well (84 yards per game) and is averaging only 21 points a game. Ball State could offer a chance to work out some kinks. The Cardinals have allowed 56 and 40 points in two losses and are surrendering nearly 500 yards of offense an outing. Auburn is 4-0 all-time against Mid-American Conference foes, including a 30-0 win over Ball State in 2001.

ALABAMA (2-0) AT SOUTH CAROLINA (1-1), 2:30 P.M., WILLIAMS-BRICE STADIUM (CBS): The Crimson Tide has quietly surfaced in the national rankings after less-than-spectacular non-conference victories over Middle Tennessee State and Southern Mississippi. The Gamecocks nearly nabbed the first signature win in Steve Spurrier's first season last week before falling at Georgia 17-15. Defense has been Bama's strength. The Tide leads the SEC in rushing defense (21.5 yards per game) and total defense (178 yards per game). The Gamecocks won the last two meetings with the Tide, including a 20-3 decision last year at home in Columbia.

KENTUCKY (1-1) AT INDIANA (2-0), 5:45 P.M., MEMORIAL STADIUM (ESPN CLASSIC): The Wildcats and Hoosiers both avoided embarrassing defeats to I-AA foes last week, making this a tough game to figure. UK evened the series with its border-state rival last season with a 51-32 triumph that began the end of Gerry DiNardo's tenure in Bloomington. That was the Wildcats' third straight win over IU, which had to rally with a late touchdown to beat Nicholls State 35-31 last week. Kentucky had a similarly tough time against Idaho State, winning 41-29 after trailing 16-14 at halftime and 29-28 with 5:06 left in the game.

MISSISSIPPI STATE (1-1) VS. TULANE (0-0), 7 P.M., INDEPENDENCE STADIUM, SHREVEPORT (CSTV): The Green Wave finally starts the season after having its initial opener wiped out by Hurricane Katrina. Mississippi State wobbled through a 28-0 loss at Auburn last week and is still trying to establish its offense. The Bulldogs cruised past Tulane 28-7 last season in coach Sylvester Croom's debut. That was State's sixth win in the last seven games against the Wave.

ARKANSAS (1-1) AT NO. 1 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (1-0), 9:15 P.M., THE LOS ANGELES COLISEUM (FSN): The Razorbacks can only hope they were looking ahead to this game last week. Arkansas dropped a 28-24 game

Brotherly love? Florida-Tennessee rivalry loses spice; SEC BOTTOM LINE T

at home against Vanderbilt and is now 7-7 in SEC openers since joining the league in 1992. The Hogs' task today is to snap the Trojans' 23-game winning streak and derail a run that has carried SC to the undisputed national championship last season and the Associated Press crown in 2003.

LOAD-DATE: September 19, 2005

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Copyright 2005 New York Daily News
Daily News (New York)

September 24, 2005, Saturday

SECTION: SPORTS

KR-ACC-NO: K3474

LENGTH: 960 words

HEADLINE: Willingham vs. Weis highlights college weekend

BYLINE: By Dick Weiss

BODY:

NEW YORK _ Tyrone Willingham invited Charlie Weis to the Notre Dame campus two years ago to brainstorm with his staff and speak to the team.

Weis, a 1978 Notre Dame graduate who was the offensive coordinator of the New England Patriots at the time, did not pull any punches with the Irish players following a 5-6 season, questioning their leadership in conditioning drills and their attitude on the field.

Little did Willingham know at the time that Weis would eventually take his job. Saturday, the two meet again when Weis brings his Irish to Seattle for a meeting with Willingham's Washington Huskies.

Weis, using several players Willingham recruited, has a good team with a powerful offense. Washington (1-2) is a bad football team coming off a 1-10 season, but at least Husky fans realize it will take time to rebuild this one-time Pac-10 power.

That may be the biggest advantage Willingham has in his new job. There are no howling mobs at the door and the honeymoon doesn't end after the first loss the way it did for Willingham in 2002 when the 8-0 Irish lost to Boston College at home.

"At Notre Dame, there was always scrutiny," Willingham said in a conference call. "You have a captive audience. The program has history and tradition and then there is the subway group and the alums."

Willingham felt their wrath the second half of last season. After Notre Dame dropped to 5-3, he knew he had to win two of his final three games to hold onto his job. The Irish upset Tennessee, but lost to Pitt and USC. He was gone.

Willingham must have seen it coming. He already had an exit strategy in place, reportedly holding informal talks with Washington three weeks before the end of the season.

The firing brought a mixed reaction, especially from the African-American community on campus, but football at Notre Dame has always been a bottom-line sport and Willingham was 21-15 after starting out 8-0. He had lost five games by 31 or more points - three to rival USC.

That's no way to wake up the echoes.

Notre Dame fans, looking to justify the coaching move, will no doubt use a sixth straight Irish victory over the Huskies as a referendum to show the decision to can Willingham three years into a six-year contract was the right thing to do.

Willingham vs. Weis highlights college weekend Daily News (New York) Sep

"Is there anything I can do that will change that?" Willingham asked. "They'll still have the same referendum. What will I do to change that thought? It's a great question, but honestly, there's nothing I'm going to do to change any of this around or any detractors."

Willingham's main goal now is to turn around Washington. An upset over Notre Dame would help do that, and likely turn up the heat on Weis.

USC's shaky on defense

Top-ranked USC (2-0), which is averaging 66.5 points a game, has been such an offensive juggernaut the first two games, no one has bothered to check on the status of a defense that gave up 437 yards to Hawaii and 326 to Arkansas.

But when the Trojans visit Oregon (3-0) at Autzen Stadium _ the toughest place to play in the Pac-10 _ it's possible that the Ducks, who are averaging 40.7 points a game, could seriously damage SC's aura of invincibility. The Trojans must replace two injured starters in linebacker Dallas Sartz and cornerback Terrell Thomas.

Thomas, who suffered an ACL injury during a 70-17 victory over Arkansas, is out for the season, never a good thing for a paper-thin secondary attempting to slow down a quarterback like Kellen Clemens. Depth at that position was already a concern because Eric Wright, a starter last year, experienced legal problems that prompted his suspension from the team last March and eventual transfer to UNLV. Pete Carroll, who also serves as defensive coordinator, plans to plug that hole with senior John Walker.

Sartz, a co-captain and three-year starter, dislocated his shoulder and is expected to miss three games. His backup, Brian Cushing, a freshman from Bergen Catholic, N.J., is also out with a dislocated shoulder, leaving Carroll to go with sophomore Thomas Williams.

We're surprised SC is a 21[point favorite in this one.

Stock Report

Stock Up: Vanderbilt. The Commodores are 3-0 for the first time since 1984 and their next two games are against Richmond and winless Middle Tennessee, which means they could be 5-0 heading into their Oct. 8 game against LSU. Look for 6-4, 228-pound senior quarterback Jay Cutler, a four-year starter who is averaging 289 yards passing and 338 yards total offense, to possibly receive some Heisman hype.

LSU quarterback Jamarcus Russell. He threw for four TDs in a 35-31 road win over Arizona State on Sept. 10 and is one of the feel-good stories to come out of the Katrina disaster. Russell, who was helping with triage at the Maravich Center on campus, put up 77-year-old rock-and-roll legend Fats Domino and 20 others in his apartment for two days. Domino, who lived in a compound in the working-class lower ninth ward, was rescued from the balcony of his flooded house and bussed to Baton Rouge. Russell, who leads the Tigers (1-0) against Tennessee (1-1) on Saturday, recognized Domino, who is a relative of his girlfriend, and invited him home.

Stock Down: Stanford. The Cardinal, which lost to Cal-Davis last Saturday, couldn't manage an offensive touch-down against a team making the transition from Division II to Division I-AA. After quarterback Trent Edwards suffered an injured right hand at the end of the first quarter, new coach Walt Harris had no dependable backup.

Pitt. Who would have thought new coach Dave Wannstedt would be 0-3? The Panthers missed two shots at a game-winning field goal last week at the end of a 7-6 loss at Nebraska. Next up: Youngstown State.

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JOURNAL-CODE: NY

LOAD-DATE: September 24, 2005

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Copyright 2005 Bucyrus Telegraph Forum (Bucyrus, OH)
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Bucyrus Telegraph Forum (Ohio)

September 27, 2005 Tuesday

SECTION: Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 551 words

HEADLINE: There have been lots of best evers

BYLINE: DAN CLUTTER:POINT BLANK

BODY:

Right now, the Southern California Trojans are being called by some the best college team ever. Awesome and unbeatable are just some of the words thrown around.

SC is looking for its third straight national title, and second straight BCS crown. It's won 25 games in a row and has vaporized teams with its explosive offense and sturdy defense.

SC has quarterbacks who have won the last two Heismans, and a running back who appears destined to win the next one.

The Trojans have been number one in The Associated Press college football poll since Ted Ginn was still at Glenville High School.

According to many, SC should just skip the rest of its schedule. Instead of playing teams like the Minnesota Golden Gophers, perhaps it should play teams like the Minnesota Vikings.

No one, I mean, no one, can play with the Trojans.

But before anyone decides to bronze Reggie Bush's baby shoes, sit down and take a deep breath.

The Trojans are a great team, a team that could threepeat. But history, and some pretty good college football teams, still stand in the way.

SC is just the latest in a long line of the best college football teams ever. For some that moniker lasted just long enough to see their dreams snapped on the football field.

In college football, the more things change the more they stay the same. A number of teams have been in the position SC holds now.

Remember Bud Wilkinson's Oklahoma Sooners of the 1950s? One of the first best of all time teams, the Sooners made mincemeat of everyone for nearly five years, winning an incredible 47 straight games. But the Sooners were reduced to mortal beings in a 6-0 loss to Notre Dame.

The Sooners still have their deserved place in history. But the best ever? That's debatable.

Perhaps it was the Nebraska Cornhuskers of the 1970s? Or the Notre Dame teams of the 1940s? Or the 1920s with the Four Horsemen under Knute Rockne? All those teams were called the best of all time at one point; but very few hold that distinction anymore.

Most people around here certainly remember Woody Hayes' 1969 Buckeyes. That was the team that had won 22 games in a row and averaged 46 points and more than 500 yards per game.

There have been lots of best evers Bucyrus Telegraph Forum (Ohio) Septem

No one stood up to the Bucks. This was the same group of players who blasted Michigan 50-14 to close the 1968 regular season before dispatching Southern California and O.J. Simpson in the Rose Bowl, 27-16.

This team was so good that many sports writers were actually considering petitioning the Big Ten to let the Buckeyes play in the Rose Bowl. In those days, only the Big Ten champion was permitted to go to a bowl, but the conference had a non-repeat rule, which barred a team from going to the Rose Bowl in back-to-back years.

A petition was never needed. As everyone over the age of 40 remembers all too well, the Buckeyes were ambushed in Ann Arbor, 24-12.

College football has always had a habit of bringing down teams that get too big for their own good. Call it complacency, or just the nature of the beast, teams stumble somewhere along the line.

That's not to say the Trojans will stumble this year. That third straight national crown might just happen. But winning streaks eventually end, and the accolades eventually dwindle to a few, as the next best ever team is built.

That's college football.

LOAD-DATE: September 30, 2005

115 of 2532 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2005 The Detroit News
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The Detroit News (Michigan)

September 28, 2005 Wednesday

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 5D

LENGTH: 508 words

HEADLINE: Lions defend alma maters;
Even though they're pros, they still pledge allegiance to colleges and talk a good game.

BYLINE: Jim Spadafore

BODY:

ALLEN PARK -- There's some trash talking in the Lions locker room, and it's not about their next opponent, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

It's about the players' alma maters. Who has the best college team? Is it Southern Cal, Texas or Virginia Tech?

And how about surprising Michigan State?

Wide receiver Charles Rogers was doing a lot of hooting and hollering about his Spartans and their game Saturday against Michigan.

But rookie wide receiver Mike Williams was hooting and hollering the most, because his Southern California team is No. 1.

USC is fresh from a 45-13 victory over Joey Harrington's Oregon Ducks. Did Williams call Harrington during the game?

"Joey knew since they scheduled the game that they were going to lose, so there was nothing really to talk about," Williams said. "But I called him when it was 13-0. But he wouldn't answer the phone."

Said Harrington: "I didn't answer my phone at all. It was family weekend."

Williams was ready to take on all comers regarding USC. He started yelling at running back Kevin Jones, whose Virginia Tech Hokies are No. 3.

"(Virginia) Tech would go down there and lose every game," Williams shouted.

Jones just smiled.

"When it comes to USC, opponents think there's a little light at the end of the tunnel," Williams continued. "There is. It's a train.

"We have the best quarterback in the country (Matt Leinart); the best running back and the best all-around player in Reggie Bush, hands down. We have the biggest, fastest and strongest offensive line. We have a defense that's lights-out."

Wide receiver Roy Williams, whose Texas Longhorns are ranked No. 2, had words for Mike Williams.

"No, man, nobody's worried about the Trojans," Roy Williams said. "They have a tough schedule coming up. I don't see them doing it, SC is good, but they don't want to see Texas. We're from down South and we've got a better quarterback (Vince Young). It would be a good matchup. Maybe we'll see them in the Rose Bowl."

Lions defend alma maters; Even though they're pros, they still pledg

The Williamses were vocal, but tackle Jeff Backus wasn't in a jovial mood. His Michigan Wolverines are 2-2 going into the game against the Spartans.

A few weeks ago, who would have thought that the Spartans would be favored?

"That's the way it's gone," Backus said. "They (the Wolverines) have had an up-and-down season.

"But I'm sure those coaches are going to have them ready to play. If not, they're going to be in for a long day."

Bryant is done for season

The injury bug has bitten cornerback Fernando Bryant for the second straight season.

The Lions put Bryant on injured reserve, ending his season after two games. He suffered a dislocated left shoulder in the second game, against Chicago.

Andre Goodman will start in Bryant's place at left cornerback Sunday.

Injuries have cut short Bryant's two seasons in Detroit. He missed 10 games in 2004 because of a sprained ankle.

To take Bryant's place on the 53-player active roster, the Lions signed wide receiver Scottie Vines . He was with the Lions in 2004 but released in the final cut this season.

LOAD-DATE: September 29, 2005

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USA TODAY

September 29, 2005, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 9C

LENGTH: 689 words

HEADLINE: Ariz. State faces huge challenge

BYLINE: Greg Boeck

DATELINE: TEMPE, Ariz.

BODY:

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Ask Bill Miller, Arizona State's defensive coordinator, about Saturday's date at Sun Devil Stadium with Southern California's off-the-charts offense, and he deadpans, "Our goal is to keep them under 60 points and make them punt."

He laughs, but his point is clear: This is no ordinary assignment for the 15th-ranked Sun Devils (3-1). In the No. 1-ranked Trojans' 3-0 start, which has stretched their winning streak to 25 games, the two-time defending national champions have averaged 59.3 points and 615.7 yards -- and punted just four times.

"How do you stop an offense like that?" Arizona State coach Dirk Koetter asks. "Nobody has. Look at their stats. They're unheard of. They really don't have a weakness on offense."

Matt Leinart and friends are a defensive coordinator's nightmare, but Miller is embracing the challenge as a dream opportunity. "You have to look at it as that," he says, "but it's a heck of a task."

These are the weapons the Sun Devils must contend with:

*Leinart, the Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, has completed 67.8% of his passes with 10 touchdowns and two interceptions.

*Tailback Reggie Bush is averaging 8.3 yards a rush and 17.1 yards a catch -- 10.1 yards a touch combined.

*Wide receiver Dwayne Jarrett leads the Pacific-10 with seven TD catches, and receiver Steve Smith is averaging 23.9 yards a catch.

"They're playing a real unselfish brand of football," says Miller, in his first year at Arizona State and 28th overall. "They're moving the ball around to different people to where, if you try to home in on Bush or (LenDale) White, shoot, Smith or (Dominique) Byrd will eat your lunch. I haven't found an Achilles' heel if there is one."

Asks junior defensive tackle Jordan Hill: "How do you stop a team ranked fifth nationally in passing and 13th in rushing? Which poison do you pick? There isn't anything you can really stop. What you have to do is minimize what they can do or try to contain their big plays. If they do make those big plays, you need to match it on defense, whether that's causing a fumble or interception or a sack on third down, so they can't keep rolling."

That's a monstrous assignment for an Arizona State defense that has been good but not head-turning great this season. Led by Hill, All-America middle linebacker candidate Dale Robinson and linebacker Jamar Williams, the Sun Devils have 12 takeaways and 12 sacks and allowed 25 of 64 (39%) on third-down conversions.

But they've yielded 24 points and 410 yards a game and failed to protect a 17-7 lead against LSU after three quarters in a 35-31 loss. This is not your classic irresistible force vs. immovable object.

Ariz. State faces huge challenge USA TODAY September 29, 2005, Thursday,

Asked if his team's better against the run or pass, Miller pauses, then answers, "That's a good question. We'll find out directly. We'll find out if we're any good at all."

Trojans coach Pete Carroll calls the Sun Devils defense unique. "We haven't seen anyone like them. They're very aggressive, doing a lot of unusual things in coverage and pressure."

Told of the compliments heaped on his defense by Carroll, Miller laughed. "He's a sandbagger. He's full of baloney. The schematics of it are very overrated. Wanting it -- that's probably our only hope. You have to want it and perform."

Arizona State didn't last season. Both teams went into the game 5-0, and USC claimed a 45-7 victory at home. The Sun Devils are hoping to repeat 1996, not 2004. Nine years ago Arizona State thumped then-No.1 Nebraska 19-0 at home on the way to the Rose Bowl.

In the end, Arizona State's best defense might be its offense, ranked fourth nationally. The Sam Keller-led unit has put up mind-boggling stats, too, averaging 41 points and 591.8 yards a game. Keller leads the nation in passing with 1,443 yards and 16 touchdowns and has not been intercepted in his last 124 attempts.

"They're bombing everybody," Carroll says.

"Our offense is right up there, pushing any offense in the country," Hill says. "I've got full confidence in Sam and the other guys. We have to keep SC's offense off the field and keep ours on."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, B/W, Paul Connors, AP

LOAD-DATE: September 29, 2005

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The Houston Chronicle

September 30, 2005, Friday 3 STAR EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 12

LENGTH: 726 words

HEADLINE: USC's top-ranked juggernaut appears unstoppable;
Abundant talent enables Trojans to overcome loss of offensive guru

SOURCE: Staff

BYLINE: TERRANCE HARRIS

BODY:

It seems with each football week, the legend of USC grows:

.Twenty-five straight victories.

.Twenty-three consecutive weeks at No. 1 in the AP poll.

.Reggie Bush. Matt Leinart. Pick your poison.

The question these days is can Pete Carroll's Trojans (3-0) be stopped as they run through respectable opponents with relative ease.

"I don't know. I don't think so," said Arkansas coach Houston Nutt, whose team was overwhelmed 70-17 two weeks ago to give the Razorbacks their second-worst defeat. "As long as Matt Leinart is healthy and Reggie Bush is healthy.

"The offensive line is the thing that is underrated. They are very good.

"Then you get to tight ends and receivers, they have weapons at every position, so I don't see it."

Oregon has come closest to slowing the two-time defending national champs, taking a 13-10 lead into halftime last weekend at Autzen Stadium.

But that was short-lived as Leinart and Bush got busy in the second half and guided the Trojans to five touchdowns in five consecutive drives en route to a 45-13 victory.

"SC is a very talented football team," said Oregon coach Mike Bellotti, who was one of several coaches who turned down the USC job before Carroll took over in 2001. "I think their defense is underrated and Reggie Bush is as advertised. I think he is the most dynamic, explosive player I've seen in college football."

There was concern coming into this season that USC wouldn't be able to maintain offensive juggernaut status after offensive coordinator Norm Chow bolted for the Tennessee Titans coordinator's job.

But with Leinart, last year's Heisman Trophy winner, back for his senior season, the offense has kicked into what seems a higher gear.

The Trojans average 615.7 yards of offense per game and score an average of 59.3 points compared to 15.7 by the opposition.

USC's top-ranked juggernaut appears unstoppable; Abundant talent en

"I don't think you can minimize the loss of Norm Chow," said Carroll, whose team ripped through Oklahoma 55-19 during last season's national championship game in the Orange Bowl. "He had everything to do with our putting our team together, our system and all of that.

"But in transition, I thought we had a chance to be really good and not lose a step continuity-wise with (quarterbacks coach) Steve Sarkisian coming back from the Oakland Raiders.

"We've picked up where we left off, relationships are going great. But we are still going to be challenged."

That next challenge comes Saturday when the Trojans visit No. 14 Arizona State and its high-powered offense.

USC also has potential pitfalls at Notre Dame and California.

Fulmer admits mistake

Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer isn't afraid to admit when he is wrong.

He acknowledged his error all week after watching senior quarterback Rick Clausen come off the bench Monday night and erase a 21-0 deficit to upend then No. 4 LSU 30-27 at home.

A week earlier, Fulmer declared youngster Erik Ainge the quarterback after Clausen had outplayed him in the first two games of the season. But Clausen has been named the starter as Tennessee heads into its matchup this weekend with Mississippi.

"He was mad at me and he should have been," Fulmer told the Nashville Tennessean. "I was wrong. I've been wrong before, and I will be wrong again."

Quick hits

Michigan, the winningest team in college football, is out of the Associated Press poll for the first time in seven years after dropping to 2-2 with Saturday's loss to Wisconsin. No. 15 Alabama (4-0) has a chance to prove it's back with this week's Southeastern Conference showdown against fourth-ranked Florida (4-0).

Keeping tabs

Arizona State senior linebacker Jamar Williams turned in an outstanding performance during the Sun Devils' 42-24 victory over Oregon State this past Saturday.

The Langham Creek product led the Sun Devils' defense with 13 tackles, one sack, a forced fumble and an interception to earn Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Week honors.

For the season, Williams is Arizona State's fifth-leading tackler with 17 stops in three games.

Quotable

"It's still the same obvious problem we have had, and I've said that since 1995. The numbers speak to anybody who has a brain." Washington coach Tyrone Willingham on the fact there are just three African-American coaches out of 119 Division I-A programs.

NOTES: terrance.harris@chron.com

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The Arizona Republic (Phoenix)

September 30, 2005 Friday Final chaser Edition

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 1C

LENGTH: 777 words

HEADLINE: STAR QBS EARNING FACE TIME;
DEVILS' KELLER EYES HIS SHOT TO DENT ARMOR OF TROJANS

BYLINE: By Jeff Metcalfe, The Arizona Republic

BODY:

Sam Keller was only 16, still a kid but already the man at San Ramon Valley High School in Danville, a California town 20 miles east of Berkeley.

His 31-yard screen pass in the 2000 regular-season finale was the game winner over Monte Vista, with its own sophomore quarterback sensation in Kyle Wright, who is now at Miami. That playoff clincher allowed Keller to settle in for his Saturday morning ritual.

"I'd wake up, my mom would cook me breakfast and all I would do is read the paper from the night before and watch college football," he said. "(Lee) Corso, (Chris) Fowler, (Kirk) Herbstreit, I love watching those guys (on ESPN GameDay). It was like an all-day TV show when I was growing up."

Up next for San Ramon was De La Salle, then 110 games into a national record winning streak that reached 151 over 14 years before ending last fall. Keller and his teammates likely imagined themselves as having a chance, but that drained away during the 14-mile drive north to Concord for what would be a 68-0 humbling.

"We lost the game when we got off the bus," Keller said. "We saw the green and the Spartans and all their fans and all their stuff. They had that kind of mystique."

So, too, will Southern California when it swaggers on Saturday into Sun Devil Stadium, where Keller and Arizona State stand in the way of a Pac-10 record 26th consecutive win.

There's the Cardinal and Gold, the fight song and the band, Traveler the horse, and memories of last year at the Coliseum, where Keller experienced a De La Salle-like flashback during ASU's 45-7 loss. He got in for only mop-up duty but suffered right along with starting quarterback Andrew Walter.

"I'll tell you what, all that tradition is impressive when you see it, especially when I got to watch the whole thing on the sideline," Keller said. "Their confidence started rolling and you could just feel it, and everybody kind of just got scared. SC is coming to our house, and we want to show them a little bit what it's like."

Corso, Fowler and Herbstreit are here to blab up the game, and while they may make note of how former high school rivals Keller and Wright are quarterbacking two of the nation's top 15 teams, there's also the more pertinent analysis of USC's Matt Leinart vs. Keller, both of whom rank in the top seven nationally in passing efficiency and total offense.

The 6-foot-5 Leinart, already studying NFL quarterbacks in preparation for next season, is ahead by any standard. As a fifth-year senior, he has a two-year edge on 6-4 Keller, a junior who did not redshirt and is making only his sixth start.

STAR QBS EARNING FACE TIME;DEVILS' KELLER EYES HIS SHOT TO DENT ARM

Actress/singer Jessica Simpson partied with Leinart on his 22nd birthday in May at a Hollywood club. Keller turned 21 on Wednesday in a birthday week that began with a dead car battery because he forgot to turn off the headlights.

"This isn't Los Angeles," said Keller, who first committed to Michigan before deciding his father's alma mater wasn't for him. "I don't need to have Jessica Simpson running around or anybody like that to make me happy. I can just turn on the TV. That works for me.

"If you're doing good (in LA), everybody loves you. Like if you're a celebrity and you make a good movie. But if you make a couple of bad movies, nobody likes you."

The Trojans have been doing good for plenty long -- 10 wins away from an unprecedented third consecutive national title under coach Pete Carroll.

Keller credits Leinart, who's been at the helm for the entire three-year run, but more so his supporting cast. The same applies to ASU's success, he says. USC comes into the game second nationally in total offense and ASU fourth.

"You watch the Oregon game, he (Leinart) has like eight seconds to throw," Keller said. "He could have made a sandwich, ate it, looked down, dropped half of it, picked it up, ate it and then, oh, throw the ball. He's a great quarterback, but I keep telling you he's got a lot of guys around him that make him look good."

Keller's father Mike, whose football resume includes the NFL, USFL, World League and XFL, compares Sam's opportunity to the one he had as a linebacker at Michigan in 1969. Ohio State came into Ann Arbor with a 22-game win streak and aspirations of a second national championship and left with neither following a 24-12 shocker.

"We were better than people thought, and that's kind of what I'm seeing here (in ASU)," Mike Keller said. "Nobody thought Ohio State could be beaten, not even by the (Minnesota) Vikings. Everybody believed that except the Michigan coaching staff and players. Sam and I have watched that game (tape) more than once."

Now it's ASU fans requesting: Play it again, Sam.

GRAPHIC: 1) ASU quarterback Sam Keller doesn't care to lead the LA life: "I don't need to have Jessica Simpson running around or anybody like that to make me happy." 2) ASU's Sam Keller is making just his sixth start on Saturday.

LOAD-DATE: October 1, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Oregonian
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The Oregonian (Portland, Oregon)

October 1, 2005 Saturday
Sunrise Edition

SECTION: Sports; Pg. C03

LENGTH: 572 words

HEADLINE: Today's games: USC discounts ailing defense

BYLINE: KEN GOE, The Oregonian

BODY:

Arizona State has an opportunity to shake up the polls at 12:30 p.m. today when the No. 13 Sun Devils play host to No. 1 USC at Sun Devil Stadium.

On paper, this looks like the most difficult game to date for the Trojans (3-0, 1-0 Pacific-10 Conference), who appeared to be in trouble last week at Oregon before recovering in the second half to win going away.

Arizona State (3-1, 1-0) leads the Pac-10 in passing offense, and swashbuckling junior quarterback Sam Keller averages 360.8 yards per game.

Keller takes aim at a battered USC defense. But Trojans coach Pete Carroll shrugged off an injury list that most recently claimed starting defensive tackle LaJuan Ramsey, who has a bad ankle but could play.

"We've had to mix and match a little bit," Carroll said. "It's a typical challenge for coaches this time of year."

The weather could be a factor, with the temperature in the Phoenix area predicted to top 100 degrees. Arizona State coach Dirk Koetter's vertical passing game could cause problems for the Trojans, too.

"They've thrown it over everybody's head so far, and they've been pretty successful doing it," Carroll said. "If that happens to us, we don't have a chance. So we'll have to take care of all the downfield stuff, the seams, the posts and corner routes they throw."

USC handled it beautifully last season, hammering Arizona State 45-7 at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Two years ago at ASU, however, the Sun Devils had a 17-10 lead in the third quarter before USC rallied for a 37-17 victory.

"We just stunk it up last year," Koetter said.

If anything, the stage is bigger this season, with the ESPN "College GameDay" crew broadcasting from just outside the stadium and the ASU sports information office handling a record number of media credential requests.

"When you come to a Pac-10 school like Arizona State, it's to play in games like this," Koetter said.

Keller, who turned 21 this week, had fun this week playing off USC quarterback Matt Leinart's glamour image. Leinart, last season's Heisman Trophy winner, celebrated his 22nd birthday in the spring in Hollywood with entertainer Jessica Simpson. Keller told local reporters he spent part of his birthday dealing with a dead car battery.

"This isn't Los Angeles," Keller said.

But for a weekend, it will be college football's place to be. If Keller has a big day and the Sun Devils at least slow down Leinart, Reggie Bush, LenDale White et al., who knows?

Today's games: USC discounts ailing defense The Oregonian (Portland

"We can't turn the ball over," Koetter said. "If you turn the ball over against SC, you have no chance. That's first and foremost. No. 2, we have to do a good job of tackling in space. Because they can take the simplest plays and go the distance."

Elsewhere in the Pac-10 today:

Arizona (1-2, 0-0) at No. 12 California (4-0, 1-0): Some think the Golden Bears are more pretender than contender because their four victories have been underwhelming against featherweight competition. But Cal has had injury issues. The Bears are expected to welcome back offensive linemen Andrew Cameron and Aaron Merz and tailback Marshawn Lynch, which should make the offense go.

Washington (1-3, 0-1) at No. 20 UCLA (3-0, 0-0): UCLA tailback Maurice Drew blew through the Huskies for 322 yards rushing last season. He probably won't get that many this time, but he shouldn't have to. The Bruins have a more potent passing game and a better defense. It all adds up to trouble for Washington.

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kengoe@news.oregonian.com

LOAD-DATE: October 5, 2005

Copyright 2005 News World Communications, Inc.
The Washington Times

October 3, 2005 Monday

SECTION: SPORTS; BACK JUDGE; Pg. C12

LENGTH: 886 words

HEADLINE: Trojans are primed to be upset

BYLINE: By Barker Davis, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

Southern California has decided to make the national title chase interesting by handicapping itself.

After opening the season with three-peat worthy disembowelings of Hawaii and Arkansas, the Trojans have taken a nasty turn toward complacency, condescension and the same brand of hubris which conspired to bring down impenetrable ancient Troy from within.

For the second consecutive week, USC didn't come prepared to play, spotted a team a double-digit lead and relied on its massive edge in talent to overwhelm its competitive indifference.

Last week at Oregon, the Trojans scored 45 unanswered points and turned a 13-10 halftime deficit into a showy 45-13 victory.

There were no such style points Saturday at Arizona State, when they came from 18 down at intermission (21-3) for a misleadingly lopsided 38-28 victory. As any impartial witness will tell you, the Trojans were one near-catch-turned-interception from losing in Tempe.

With USC ahead 31-28 and less than four minutes left, both the ASU offense and Sun Devil Stadium were rocking. State quarterback Sam Keller, who had just finished eviscerating USC's defense, was driving the Sun Devils toward another go-ahead score when receiver Derek Hagan volleyballed what would have been an impressive catch at the USC 40-yard line directly to USC safety Kevin Ellison, who was badly beaten on the play. Three plays later, USC's LenDale White exploited the disheartened Sun Devils by bolting 46 yards for a game-sealing touchdown. But both the win and USC's postgame comments were far from impressive.

In the first half, USC scored just three points and committed nine offensive penalties - an obvious sign that they weren't focused - and Heisman winner Matt Leinart wasn't the best quarterback in the stadium, much less the nation.

And after the Houdini job in the desert, when apologies and promises of renewed commitment were in order, both White and USC coach Pete Carroll engaged in a verbal pridefest.

"Basically, they believe they can't be beat," said Carroll, practically bragging about a red-flag attitude most coaches would list somewhere between fumbles and felonies on the anathema meter.

Said White, "First quarter, second quarter, third quarter - whatever. Here at SC, we teach 'Finish.' "

All of a sudden, White's not just a tailback, he's a teacher - perhaps an authority on the use of mid-name capitalization.

Finishing is a football virtue, but White and Co. seem to have forgotten other helpful pigskin cliches concerning such topics as starting strong, staying focused, remaining humble, fighting for 60 minutes, ignoring one's hype, etc. As talented as this team is, and nobody else is close, USC clearly has a nasty case of that historic dynasty-crippler known as delusions of invincibility.

Trojans are primed to be upset The Washington Times October 3, 2005 Mond

They're saying all the wrong things. They can be had. And Notre Dame is hungry and waiting in South Bend.

Gameballs and Gassers

This week's individual honors go to Nebraska's Zac Taylor and Michigan's Mike Hart, while team leather goes to Alabama, Penn State and Maryland.

Taylor set Nebraska records for completions (36) and passing yardage (431) as the Cornhuskers moved to 4-0 with a 27-20 overtime victory against Iowa State. Hey, it only took Bill Callahan's offense 20 months and 15 games to find its way from the West Coast to Lincoln.

Hart came back from a hamstring injury suffered against Notre Dame, running the ball 36 times for 218 yards in a road upset of the Spartans. Michigan is a completely different offensive team with the sophomore tailback in the lineup.

Alabama is back among the game's elite after giving first-year Florida coach Urban Meyer a humiliating 31-3 lesson in SEC-style football. The victory was the Crimson Tide's first over a top-five team at home in six years and just coach Mike Shula's second in 10 tries against ranked squads. The victory almost exonerates Shula for crippling playmaker Tyrone Prothro (broken leg), who was lost for the season late in the fourth quarter with the game long decided.

Penn State (5-0) throttled Minnesota 44-14 to put the kibosh on Laurence Maroney's Heisman hopes and set up a Big Ten showdown with Ohio State this weekend in Happy Valley. With one more win, the Nits will be bowl-eligible and can put an end to the decade-long JoePa retirement watch. The last time this many men were sacrificed for one man's ego, the pharaoh was prancing around Giza in a hard hat. JoePa's egress has been anything but grandiose and graceful, but at long last, he'll almost certainly exit a winner.

And kudos to Maryland and coach Ralph Friedgen for putting a season-making spite stake in Virginia 45-33. Nothing takes the sour out of a season like playing spoiler for a border-state school, particularly when that school calls itself the University.

Gassers go to Vanderbilt and Meyer.

The Commodores wasted an opportunity for their first national ranking and first 5-0 start in 50 years by reverting to form in an inexplicably awful 17-15 loss to Middle Tennessee State.

Meyer has now officially lost his genius label after the Gators failed to score a touchdown for the first time since 1992 in the 31-3 debacle in Tuscaloosa. Even maligned Ron Zook managed to keep that streak alive. In the decisive first half, Meyer's Gators had more three-and-outs (six) than first downs (five). Let's make that Urban Mire.

LOAD-DATE: October 3, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Hartford Courant Company
Hartford Courant (Connecticut)

October 7, 2005 Friday
STATEWIDE EDITION

SECTION: Pg. J1

LENGTH: 1070 words

HEADLINE: NO SMALL FEATS;
THERE ISN'T ANY UTAH -- OR ANOTHER MID-MAJOR -- TO CHALLENGE BCS STRUCTURE THIS
SEASON

BYLINE: KEN DAVIS; Courant Staff Writer

BODY:

Utah's place in Bowl Championship Series history appears to be secure.

In the first week of October 2004, five teams outside the BCS conference structure were still undefeated and the term "BCS buster" was becoming part of the vernacular. There was great celebration at the end of the season when the Utes finished sixth in the BCS standings, met the qualifications for a BCS game, and went on to beat Pittsburgh in the Fiesta Bowl.

But all the talk of crashing the BCS party has quieted this season. With no unbeaten teams left in the non-BCS conferences, it appears Utah will be the only successful buster in the system's history.

This is the eighth and final year of the original BCS structure. The new format will ease qualifying standards (currently a finish of sixth or higher) for teams from non-BCS conferences.

The idea is to grant greater access to the BCS, and programs such as Utah, Boise State, Fresno State and others could become frequent visitors to the January bowl scene. One conference champion from Conference USA, the Mid-American, Mountain West, Sun Belt and Western Athletic conferences will automatically qualify if it is ranked 12th or higher in the final BCS standings, or finishes in the top 16 and is ranked higher than a champion from a BCS conference.

And the addition of a fifth BCS game means two more teams will be invited each year.

"It does expand access considerably," said Kevin Weiberg, BCS coordinator and Big 12 commissioner. "If you look back historically, if we had this provision I think teams from those conferences would have qualified in three years out of a four-year period that I charted."

Weiberg is confident that the doors will swing open in the first year. If it does start to become routine, Utah's undefeated run last season will start to take on an even more magical meaning.

"Any time you go undefeated, it's special," Texas El-Paso coach Mike Price said.

But under the present format, perfection was practically a minimum requirement.

Accepting Less Than Perfection

There are 12 unbeaten teams left in Division I-A and they represent five of the six power conferences: the Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Big Ten, Pac-10 and Southeastern. The Big East, the other league with an automatic BCS berth, does not have an undefeated member.

NO SMALL FEATS; THERE ISN'T ANY UTAH -- OR ANOTHER MID-MAJOR -- TO

The non-BCS conference teams that were thought to have a chance to repeat Utah's success all have at least one loss. Of course, even Utah would be hard-pressed to repeat Utah's success after quarterback Alex Smith was drafted first overall by the San Francisco 49ers, and coach Urban Meyer left for Florida.

"Look at what Utah did last year and then it loses its coach and quarterback," Mountain West commissioner Craig Thompson said. "Yet, if we don't have a Utah-type team again this season there is going to be skepticism that it was a one-time thing."

"There's so much balance in our league. We don't want to have to be perfect every year to get there. We want to send a champion with a 10-1 record, or 9-2 or 8-3, to the BCS -- just like the qualifying leagues."

Difficult Game To Play

It is extremely difficult for the mid-majors to rise in the BCS rankings based on conference results. That puts increased emphasis on nonconference schedules. Those teams must take higher risks.

Utah set the stage for its run last season with a 41-21 victory over Texas A&M in its opener. When the Utes followed that with victories over Arizona and North Carolina, the rewards were great. Louisville, which played in Conference USA last year, had a more difficult mission. A loss to Miami showed the importance of upsetting a BCS conference team.

"Some of the teams that were picked to [be this year's Utah] in the preseason have played very tough nonconference schedules," Bowling Green coach Gregg Brandon said. "Boise, for example, had to go to Georgia. We had to go to Wisconsin and Boise. Those were tough nonconference road games. When you're playing Top 20 teams -- not just one, but two or three -- it's hard to run the table."

This week's polls are controlled by teams from BCS conferences. Fresno State (2-1) of the WAC represents the lone hope for the outsiders. The Bulldogs, who play at New Mexico State Saturday night, lost at Oregon State 37-34 on Sept. 17 but bounced back to defeat Toledo 44-14 last week. Fresno was 32nd overall in the Associated Press poll, with 14 points.

What is most intriguing about the Bulldogs is their schedule. On Nov. 19, nine days after a WAC showdown against Boise State, Fresno State plays at No. 1 Southern Cal. Of course, a victory over the Trojans seems unlikely. But it could be a dangerous game for USC, sandwiched between key Pac-10 challenges at No. 10 Cal and the season finale Dec. 3 against No. 16 UCLA.

"We're excited about the SC game," Fresno State coach Pat Hill said. "It's a tough, tough team to play. But those are games I think you've got to play."

Hill, who desperately wants a spot at the BCS table, would love to schedule more difficult games. But most top programs shy away from the Bulldogs. Fresno State is 68-40 since Hill became coach in 1997, including 40-7 at home. He said the NCAA's move to a 12th regular season game would only make the problem worse. Many schools are plugging that slot with an I-AA opponent at home.

"We'd like to schedule a Division I-A opponent at home if we could, but that's not a reality right now," Hill said. "We're going to try to schedule as big an opponent as we can on the road. If we can't, and we can't get a I-A team at home, then we're going to schedule a I-AA team at home."

As an example, Hill mentioned one I-A school, without naming it, that opened this season against Montana State, Florida Atlantic and Arkansas State. That was Oklahoma State. Texas Tech opened with Florida International, Sam Houston State and Indiana State.

"When you look at some of the schedules people are playing, it's not only a soft schedule to keep yourself undefeated, it's also leaving a big void for schools like ourselves to get those teams," Hill said.

Hill has his own solution for increasing access to BCS games. And it has nothing to do with computer rankings or standings.

"I'd love to see Conference USA, the Mountain West, the WAC, and the MAC hold a playoff with the winner taking all and going to the fifth BCS game that's open," he said. "I think that would give us something to really play for. And I think it would be real exciting."

NO SMALL FEATS; THERE ISN'T ANY UTAH -- OR ANOTHER MID-MAJOR -- TO

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: 3 COLOR, ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANY TEAMS from non-BCS conferences have had their eyes on the prize, but only the Utah Utes got their hands on it last season. Utah went to the Fiesta Bowl and finished 12-0 by routing Pitt. BOISE STATE tackled one issue -- finishing 11-0 in the regular season -- but the best the Broncos could do was a Liberty Bowl berth. MARLON BRISCO and Fresno State say they could make a bigger impact if only they could get more high-profile opponents on the Bulldogs' schedule.

LOAD-DATE: October 7, 2005

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Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska)

October 15, 2005, Saturday IOWA;MIDLANDS;NEBRASKA;SUNRISE EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 01C; Sweep Write

LENGTH: 1124 words

HEADLINE: Bears' bluster not all Wac(k)o

BYLINE: Tom Shatel

DATELINE: WACO, Texas

BODY:

WACO, Texas -- OK, that's it. I'm outta here. It was a nice run covering college football, but enough is enough. See you at the Fall Arts and Crafts Festival.

Sorry for the rant. I'm just trying to recover after a week's worth of unthinkable quotes coming from the Baylor camp.

Linebacker Colin Allred: "I think Nebraska has lost a lot of its mystique and intimidation. It's not just Nebraska. We're better, so we don't have to be in awe."

Receiver Dominique Zeigler: "We respect them, but they don't put fear in our hearts. Seeing that N on their helmets and just thinking you were going to lose . . . that's the past. That's their tradition. We have nothing to do with that now. We know we can come out with a W if we take care of what we need to."

Cornerback C.J. Wilson, when asked if he knew what a Blackshirt was: "Uh huh, I have a few of those in my closet.

"My best friend went to Nebraska. I know about the Blackshirt tradition at Nebraska, but they don't wear the black shirts when they're on the field."

Paging Mr. Serling, Mr. Rod Serling. Please pick up a white courtesy phone.

I realize it's a new day. I realize the world of college football has been turned upside down. I was there when Kansas State won the Big 12.

But Baylor, mighty Baylor, taking out the trash talk the week of Nebraska? The Bears beat SMU, Samford, Army and Iowa State, and now their egos are on steroids? Baylor hasn't beaten Nebraska since Ike was in the White House (1956). And now suddenly it becomes routine.

A lot of walls have tumbled around the Nebraska fortress in recent years, and, yes, much of the old step-on-the-field intimidation is gone.

It just seems really comical hearing it from Baylor. Is that rock bottom?

Then again, maybe we shouldn't be so surprised.

They say there is parity in Saturday's America, and that is true, although USC, Texas, Alabama, Florida State and Penn State are names we can all spell.

But is anybody really afraid of anybody anymore? Is there such a thing as intimidation in college football?

Bears' bluster not all Wac(k)o Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska) Octob

Maybe it is because all of the giants have taken turns in the ditch and have taken hits from teams of all shapes and sizes. Yes, the scholarship limits squeeze things. And today's high school kid is less in tune with tradition and grew up in a time when USC, Texas, Alabama, FSU and Penn State were all beatable.

And, yes, now Nebraska.

Whatever, the days of teams winning games merely because of who they are, and watching the other guy wilt, are over.

You can say that Nebraska needs to beat Baylor because it's sort of the last stand, the last wall to fall. If Baylor beats the Huskers, then all bets are off.

It's too late. Every week is survival. There are few psychological edges anymore. The biggest psychological edge is a 6-3, 230-pound running back who can run the 40 in 4.0.

Nebraska needs to beat Baylor so it can go 5-1. And keep recruiting.

The Huskers will have to win tonight the old-fashioned way. They'll have to earn it. In a way, that's refreshing. It's also mindboggling for us old guys.

See you in the Pumpkin Painting tent.

Baylor trainers on standby: Baylor's defense is ranked 15th in the country, and hasn't allowed more than 23 points all season. But defensive coordinator Bill Bradley isn't sure how to prepare for NU running back Cory Ross.

"The guy you have to stop, of course, is Cory Ross," Bradley said. "He's got the shake and bake that's just outstanding. If you're not careful with him, you can lose all your CL's. Your ACL, MCL and anything else CL you have."

Taylor-made: Zac Taylor is not the perfect quarterback. But he is the perfect quarterback for Nebraska in this moment in time.

Taylor ranks 10th in the Big 12 in pass efficiency, completing 53.6 percent of his passes (not bad, actually) with five touchdowns and five interceptions. But numbers don't tell the Taylor story.

What makes the transfer so valuable is his cool-as-ice demeanor. And his lack of memory. He makes a mistake, he bounces back.

Last week against Texas Tech, Taylor had every reason to get down on himself after the first half. But he shook off the early turnovers and led a comeback that was almost one for the books.

Here in the early stages of the West Coast offense, there are going to be mistakes. There are going to be turnovers. What you want is a quarterback who plays above and beyond them.

Nebraska has that. It may come in handy.

Like tonight.

Irish vs. Trojans: Lots of folks are on the Notre Dame bandwagon for today's epic renewal of the rivalry in South Bend. It seems too easy.

Not that Notre Dame can't do it. And not that Charlie Weis won't have a bye week's worth of goodies waiting for his counterpart, Pete Carroll.

But for the Irish to pull off the mega-upset, they need USC to cooperate. They need some turnovers. Mostly, they need the Trojans to sleepwalk into the game like the two-time defending champs have all season.

If SC falls behind early, and is down at the half in South Bend, it could be big trouble. You don't come from behind at Notre Dame Stadium in a big game. There are too many ghosts. It is not recommended.

Here's where I think USC wins: The Trojans understand the urgency this week and will show up for the opening bell.

If not, we could have a Virginia Tech-Texas Rose Bowl. That'll pack 'em in.

Bears' bluster not all Wac(k)o Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska) Octob

Pete vs. Charlie: The two ex-NFL coaches have met four times in their long careers. In 1998 and 1999, Weis was offensive coordinator (with Bill Parcells) for the New York Jets while Carroll was head coach of the New England Patriots.

Weis' Jets won three of the four meetings with the Pats in those two seasons, averaging 26.8 points a game.

Of course, things have changed. Carroll has recruited better at USC than he did at New England.

Why I don't gamble: Texas giving 18 points to Colorado, even in Austin, is too much. Consider that CU is tougher than gum on a shoe and UT is coming off a win over OU for the first time since 1999, and you should have a great game.

Texas needs to win and win convincingly. The first BCS standings come out Monday. The geeks, er, folks who follow the BCS closely are predicting it will be USC, Virginia Tech and Texas.

The geeks, er, folks who follow the Big 12 closely say today's game is a preview of the Big 12 championship game, which will be played in Houston.

Sigh-Clones: Big game for Iowa State today in Columbia. The Cyclones, a Big 12 North favorite just two weeks ago, are 0-2 in the league. An 0-3 start not only takes them out of the North race, it suddenly provides heavy lifting just to become bowl eligible.

What happened? The last two close defeats would suggest that the Cyclones still aren't ready for prime time. We'll know a lot more tonight.

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Lewiston Morning Tribune (Idaho)

October 27, 2005 Thursday

SECTION: Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 741 words

HEADLINE: Trojans' greatness difficult to compute

BYLINE: Dale Grummert

BODY:

Wes Colley is a research scientist with a doctorate in astrophysical sciences from Princeton. His computer believes USC this week is the fifth-best college football team in the nation.

Compare that with the opinion of certain Pac-10 Conference coaches, who place the Trojans No. 1 by a country mile.

Perhaps the difference is this: There's no way to enter USC's brand of electricity into a computer.

"There are some guys that are fast and some guys that are quick," Washington State coach Bill Doba said when asked about Trojans tailback Reggie Bush. "But he's both. One-on-one in the open field, if he gets a little room to maneuver, he might be the best I've ever seen."

Bush is the primary, but not the only, source of anxiety for Doba as the Cougars (3-4, 0-4) prepare to face undefeated and, according to human judges, top-ranked Southern California (7-0, 4-0) in a conference game Saturday at Los Angeles.

As long as the Trojans keep winning, their failure to impress computers won't prevent them from playing in the national title game in January. But it's another indication that the Bowl Championship Series rankings are still at odds with the standard way of assessing football teams.

Despite a 29-game winning streak and an offense that leads the nation in scoring and yardage, USC slipped to No. 2 behind Texas in this week's version of the BCS standings, which later in the season will decide the elite bowl berths.

The Trojans remained No. 1 in the coaches' and Harris polls, both of which play a role in the BCS formula, but five of the six computers used in the system placed Texas at the top.

The most contrary of the computers this week was the Colley Matrix, which shoved USC all the way to fifth, behind Texas, Alabama, Georgia and Virginia Tech.

On his Web site, Wes Colley says he uses a simple and "bias-free" statistical system, based strictly on wins and losses and making no distinction between home and road wins. So it gives USC no extra credit for winning four away games in the last five weeks.

The Colley system places particular weight on a team's strength of schedule to date, "in a way that is free of bias toward conference, tradition or region," meaning that USC should gain ground on Texas as it continues to play relatively strong Pac-10 competition. Last year, on their way to a convincing national title, the Trojans didn't reach No. 1 in the Colley ratings until they were 11-0.

Other factors don't register a blip on the Colley radar.

It doesn't care that USC quarterback Matt Leinart won a Heisman Trophy last year and turned down millions of dollars to remain in school for his senior season.

Trojans' greatness difficult to compute Lewiston Morning Tribune (I

It doesn't care that Bush lines up at tailback, at slotback or at wide receiver, driving opponents nuts in the process. It doesn't care that he may dethrone Leinart as the Heisman winner this year, or that Arizona State coach Dirk Koetter compares him to Gale Sayers.

Nor is it moved by the comments of Oregon coach Mike Bellotti, whose team lost 45-13 to the Trojans last month. He called the USC offensive line "as good as any I've ever seen."

Of course, even some flesh-and-blood judges are skeptical of Troy's supremacy. Ten of 65 voters in the Associated Press poll prefer Texas.

They evidently remember USC sputtering in the first half against Oregon, Arizona State and even humdrum Arizona. They know the Trojans needed a stunning late drive and a godsend of luck to beat Notre Dame. They know injuries have depleted the USC secondary, and opponents are completing 60 percent of their passes.

The Colley computer doesn't know any of those things. It considers only a mosaic of wins and losses across the country.

Someone asked Bellotti, the dean of Pac-10 head coaches, how USC compares to the best teams in conference history.

"The Washington team of 1991 was an awesome football team, a very well-balanced team," the Oregon coach said. "Great special teams and great defense. I don't know about some of the SC teams of the '60s and '70s. But this team is pretty amazing. I didn't realize it until we played against them."

"Their offense," he said, "is probably good enough to be considered one of the very best teams ever, not just in this conference but in the nation."

The Colley Matrix might call that "bias." Others would call it the human capacity to be amazed.

Grummert may be contacted at daleg@lmtribune.com

GRAPHIC: No Caption; Reggie Bush's explosiveness as a rusher, receiver and kick returner is just one of the reasons USC leads the nation in scoring. Bush had two touchdowns in the Trojans' 51-24 victory at Washington last Saturday.

LOAD-DATE: October 27, 2005

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THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (California)

November 11, 2005 Friday
FINAL Edition

SECTION: SPORTS; RAY RATTO; Pg. D1

LENGTH: 764 words

HEADLINE: Look for mighty USC to lay down the law against Cal

BYLINE: Ray Ratto

BODY:

The Los Angeles Times, a newspaper from south of here, has reached such extremes in its coverage of the University of Southern California Trojan football team that Thursday's offering featured (swear to Jesus) a feature on Carmen Trutanich, a backup linebacker who ...

No. Carmen Trutanich, the assistant offensive coordinator who ...

No, wrong again. Carmen Trutanich, who is a Los Angeles area lawyer who represents (among others) Trojan players who fall afoul of the law.

Yes, that's the one. That's the Carmen Trutanich you were thinking of, of course.

There is a legitimate news peg here, of course: A Trojan linebacker, Rey Mauualuga, was recently arrested on suspicion of slugging a guy at a party.

But that's another story. This story is about how there are so few new things left to say about USC that the team's de facto lawyer is getting front page play. Next week: The printer repairman, and how he is Johnny-on-the-spot when Pete Carroll runs out of toner.

Forty-seven paragraphs, and not one mention of Terrell Owens. And they say we obsess.

You see, USC has become the new Notre Dame, a sort of America's Team for those college football fans not already embedded with their own local clubs.

They win all the time, usually by gum-bleeding margins. They're on TV constantly, as befits a team that hasn't lost in two years and change. They're in the TV capital of the planet, making the expense account reports much easier to submit. They have two-thirds of the viable Heisman Trophy candidates.

They are indeed the second option for those fans open-minded enough to consider a second option.

And now they are here, to face the last team to actually defeat them, the California Golden Bears, on the last field upon which they lost.

Now this game has been marked up by analysts across the land as one of USC's major tests, given that Cal has given the Trojans all it can eat twice in succession. But Cal's shortcomings have become more pronounced. Bookmakers, a notoriously unsentimental lot, have cheerfully pegged USC an 18 1/2-point favorite, and the smart money has been moving toward a USC rout, given Cal's vulnerabilities and SC's eagerness to exact massive revenge on their close calls.

Indeed, Cal can actually enhance its profile with a close loss, given its recent difficulties. Anything inside a touchdown will be considered a glorious triumph.

Look for mighty USC to lay down the law against Cal THE SAN FRANCISCO CH

Except by Jeff Tedford, the killjoy.

It will at least be in keeping with its three frustrating defeats this year (blowing a big lead at UCLA, edged by Oregon State and then losing in overtime at Oregon), if that helps at all.

But at this point, SC would probably have to be beaten outright to get knocked off the national title game track. Struggling to beat the Bears ... well, that's been done already. It will make Tedford look like a positive wizard, given that it would be with an injured and inconsistent offense, and would certainly send Cal's truest believers home with a bounce in their hearts and a song in their shoes.

Or something like that.

Mostly though, Saturday's game will tell us not much about either team. A Trojan romp tells us that the Trojans are really as good as advertised, sharp lawyering or no, and that revelation falls under the general heading, "You think?"

A strong showing by Cal will convince people that somehow Tedford has Carroll's number, given our fixation with coaches matching wits rather than athletes matching skills.

And a Cal win? Nuclear firestorm. Joe Aycoob is resuscitated. Marshawn Lynch is forgiven for whatever it is that is held against him. The defense is pronounced brilliant. Tedford goes on America's Coaching Short List, and the line outside Top Dog goes on forever.

Oh, the pundits will writhe in rage as their dream game (SC-Texas) is burned to a briquet, and replaced with Texas-Alabama (the Crimson Tide may never score), Texas-Miami (well, OK, if you must) or even Texas-LSU (so far, not even remotely fathomable).

But an SC defeat here seems so unlikely because, well, it's been so long since there has been one. The Notre Dame win was an epochal event because SC had to go to great exertions to avoid defeat; its average margin of victory in the 31-game winning streak is nearly 27, and only five of those 31 were decided by less than a touchdown.

In other words, SC is America's Team (well, America's Backup Team, anyway) because America is a land of unabashed front-runners, always extraordinarily fond of the ridiculously dominant. And SC is the frontest runner of them all right now.

They even have depth at lawyer, we have just come to learn. Now that's attention to detail.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO

Pete Carroll has led the Trojans to 31 straight wins since they lost to Jeff Tedford's Cal team in 2003. / The Chronicle

LOAD-DATE: November 12, 2005

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Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, California)

November 12, 2005, Saturday

SECTION: SPORTS

KR-ACC-NO: K1695

LENGTH: 1038 words

HEADLINE: Can the Cal Bears do it again?

BYLINE: By Jay Heater

BODY:

BERKELEY, Calif. _ Former Cal place-kicker Tyler Fredrickson, whose 38-yard field goal split the uprights for a triple-overtime, 34-31 victory over USC in 2003 _ the Trojans' last defeat _ thought he was a pretty popular guy.

"The Best Damn Sports Show" had recruited Fredrickson to discuss Cal's game against No. 1 USC on Saturday at Memorial Stadium.

The theme? Can Cal do it again?

Then came the Bears' 27-20 overtime loss last Saturday at Oregon. Fredrickson got a phone call.

"They decided not to do it," he said of his TV appearance. "Part of it had to do with Cal's loss. I heard that "College GameDay" (ESPN) was thinking about doing the game. I would imagine that they are not coming, either."

A game that might have developed into the biggest ever played in Berkeley has fizzled now that Cal has suffered three close losses in its last four games. Now 6-3 and unranked, the Bears pale in comparison to a team that is being compared to the greatest college teams ever.

Can Cal do it again?

The overwhelming opinion: no.

At least that is the message sent by the major media outlets, and oddsmakers. Nobody other than Cal fans, and players and coaches from the two teams, seems to think the Bears have a chance.

USC, which has won 31 consecutive games and is going for an unprecedented third straight national championship, is an 18 [-point favorite. It doesn't matter that Cal was the last team to beat the Trojans or that the Bears lost last season's game 23-17 only after failing to score from first-and-goal at USC's 9-yard line in the final two minutes.

"We know that Cal is a well-coached, oiled machine," said USC coach Pete Carroll. "They have a great system on defense, and, on offense they have one of the top running teams in the nation. The only difference between our teams is our experience at quarterback."

That difference is huge.

USC (9-0, 6-0) lines up reigning Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart at quarterback, and he is putting together another outstanding season. Leinart is the top-rated quarterback in the Pac-10 and has thrown 23 touchdowns compared to six interceptions. He has completed 66.8 percent of his passes, the best in the conference.

Can the Cal Bears do it again? Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, Califor

At the other end of the spectrum is Cal's Joe Ayoob, a first-year starter after transferring from City College of San Francisco. Ayoob has taken his lumps while learning on the job, completing 49.4 percent of his passes. He ranks ninth in the conference in passing efficiency.

Of course, Leinart has plenty of help. At tailback, he has Reggie Bush, who appears to be the front-runner for this year's Heisman Trophy, and LenDale White. Both average more than 100 yards rushing per game. Leinart's main targets are Dwayne Jarrett (14 touchdown receptions) and Steve Smith (19.6 yards per catch).

"You talk about all those guys, but their offensive line is so physical," Cal coach Jeff Tedford said. "You watch Leinart back there, and he looks so poised because he has time to stand around."

Tedford has studied around the clock, trying to find a way to crack college football's toughest nut. He has watched the Trojans' every move on the video screen.

"We've watched just about everything that they've done," he said. "When people have been successful against them, it's because somebody jumped over the top of a corner and made a play."

Studying the USC-Oregon game didn't bring any comfort to Tedford. The Ducks held a 13-10 halftime lead before getting blitzed in a 45-13 loss.

"They stopped themselves," Tedford said of the Trojans. "They had a couple of drops in the first half, and when they were going in for a score, they had a deflection go off somebody's hands and it was intercepted."

Notre Dame took USC to the wire before losing 34-31, and Tedford has studied that effort long and hard.

"Notre Dame didn't turn it over (each team had two turnovers)," Tedford said. "And they made big plays at times. Their athletes went up and over some of USC's athletes and they kept pretty good field position."

The Irish also had the athletes to match up with USC. "It was a very physical football game, from what I've seen," Tedford said.

Unlike USC's other opponents, Notre Dame controlled the clock by rushing the ball. That limited USC to 64 offensive plays.

Tedford said to beat USC his team will have to be turnover free, control the clock by piling up some first downs, and will have to make big plays when opportunities present themselves.

"Every play is critical," Tedford said. "Last season, we had a quarterback on fire (Aaron Rodgers tied the NCAA record by completing 23 consecutive passes), and we made a lot of plays, but the two plays we didn't make (fumbled punt, bad punt snap) hurt us. This is a tall order."

But not an impossible one.

"You have to stay calm and not go out there thinking that you are playing the No. 1 team," said Cal senior linebacker Ryan Foltz. "We've played well against them in the past, and that leads itself to us having confidence on Saturday."

However, Foltz said he doesn't fault people who say USC has the greatest offense ever. "It's hard to argue against that. They have the potential to score on every play from scrimmage."

Cal, which upset USC in 2003, entered the game with a 2-3 record.

"We still talk about it all the time," Fredrickson said. "I didn't realize how big a deal it would be. That game has become a classic now. At the time, it was just another win. At the time, nobody knew SC would become SC."

THREE KEYS TO BEATING USC

1. **TURNOVERS:** USC leads the Pac-10 with a plus-12 turnover margin, having forced 23 and given up only 11. Cal is minus-three (20 turnovers, 17 takeaways).

2. **BALL CONTROL:** In a victory over Oregon, USC ran 81 offensive plays. Against Arizona State, it ran 88. In both instances, USC opponents were unable to establish a running game. Notre Dame, which nearly defeated USC, rushed for 153 yards and limited the Trojans to 64 offensive snaps.

Can the Cal Bears do it again? Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, Califor

3. BIG PLAYS: As Cal coach Jeff Tedford says, the only time teams have hung with USC was when they made big plays. The Bears need a few "Wow!" touchdowns to have a chance. Cue Marshawn Lynch.

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Fresno Bee (California)

November 13, 2005 Sunday
FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. C1

LENGTH: 2786 words

HEADLINE: Unforgettable;
Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't pass for ancient history to those who witnessed it on the sidelines.

BYLINE: David White The Fresno Bee

BODY:

December 29, 1992.

Oh, how they still remember.

"How could anyone forget?" retired coach Jim Sweeney asks.

Fresno State, first-time co-champions of the Western Athletic Conference, versus No. 23-ranked University of Southern California, possessor of eight national titles, for the very first time.

Fresno State blue-collars Trent Dilfer and Lorenzo Neal versus USC bluebloods Rob Johnson and Willie McGinest. Freedom Bowl IX.

"Sure, I remember," former Trojans coach Larry Smith says.

Listen to Sweeney bellow the Bulldogs fight song and calling out USC players at a boisterous pregame banquet.

Catch USC star Curtis Conway sneaking uninvited into one of Fresno State's game-week practices at nearby Cerritos College.

"I remember snapshots," former Bulldogs quarterback Dilfer says.

Ride with the Red Wave, 28,000 loyalists strong, across the Grapevine in a caravan of charter buses, cars and motor homes. All so they could soak in a rainy night of postseason college football at frigid Anaheim Stadium.

Cringe at catcalls of "Tractor U" and "Farmer State" coming from the outnumbered USC crowd and band members. A homemade sign that read, "My maid went to Fresno State."

"I remember the whole week leading up to the game ... just all the little things," former Fresno State fullback Neal says.

Most of all, whether wrapped in Bulldogs red or Trojans cardinal and gold, those who were there or watched on national television will never, ever forget this:

Fresno State 24, USC 7.

"I told the players before the game they will remember it all their lives if they beat SC," Sweeney says. "They do, and they will."

Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't

On Saturday, No. 20 Fresno State and No. 1 USC play in a regular-season game at the Los Angeles Coliseum in their first meeting on a football field since the Freedom Bowl.

Thirteen years later, memories of that night are vivid as ever in the minds of players and coaches who were part of Bulldogs history that day.

Sweeney's moment

Sweeney, 63 and gregarious as could be, was at his finest, and that was before the game was even played.

On team bus rides along the 405 freeway, the 15th-year Bulldogs coach would pretend he was heavyweight boxer George Foreman, feinting left-right hooks and combo punches to the cheers of his players.

At one press conference, he tried to get the Trojans faithful to join him in a rendition of his school's fight song, beckoning for help as he sang, "I've got the Bulldog spirit deep in my heart."

"He was epic," former Fresno State defensive end Brad Bell says. "You know Coach. He can handle a crowd. In a very dry, Irish way, he insults everybody and they don't even know it."

Sweeney's prime comedy act, however, was reserved for the pregame banquet.

USC players weren't laughing as he took shots at their star players. Receiver Johnnie Morton even tried to get his teammates to walk out during his comedic routine.

"The players still all remember that," Sweeney says. "I remember, I got up and facetiously said I knew exactly how to beat the Trojans ... I was alluding to the fact that I knew the officials and they would help us win. The team gave me a standing ovation."

"The SC players got really upset with our guys for cheering. They thought we were hot-dogging it."

Sweeney detected a rotten attitude all week from the Trojans, many of whom wished to be anywhere but the Freedom Bowl after falling one victory short of tying for the Pac-10 Conference title.

Before the game, USC quarterback Rob Johnson said the Trojans never would play a team like Fresno State outside a bowl game and that he wanted to "put them in their place."

Pin-up material in the Bulldogs locker room, every quote. Sweeney made sure of that.

"They weren't real excited about playing us," Sweeney says. "They probably thought they should've been in the Rose Bowl or something, I don't know. I think they had a hard time getting motivated for that game."

"I know their coaches respected us. I don't know that the players did. They do now, I think."

Vindication was long in coming for Sweeney, who was 0-7 against the Trojans during his previous tenure at Washington State.

Wearing a red short-sleeve shirt on a damp and cold night, Sweeney celebrated after the game with a victory lap, waving his white cap at the crowd and pointing a No. 1 finger to the clouded skies.

Of Sweeney's school-record 143 victories in 19 seasons at Fresno State, he says none defined his legacy, or proved as uplifting to the university and the city of Fresno, like the Freedom Bowl did.

"That was the biggest game in school history, no doubt about that," says Sweeney, who retired from coaching in 1996 and now serves as an athletic department fundraiser for Fresno State.

"Many think it still is. Every week, I hear it ... out at the country club, eating at a restaurant. I think it proved that we can play with anybody. That was an amazing team."

Shown the door

Former USC coach Larry Smith proudly says he took the Trojans to three consecutive Rose Bowls and five bowl games in his six seasons.

What he doesn't want to be remembered for is his final game as the Trojans' general.

"I think time is always the healer of everything," Smith says. "I've had a lot of SC fans since then say they remember the first couple of years, how we really had great success."

Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't

Not so the final year, when Smith tearfully turned in his forced resignation three days after the Freedom Bowl loss ended a 6-5-1 season. He was 17-17-1 in his final 35 games.

"That loss was to our demise, although I think the coaching thing had been decided before the game."

Smith remembers the "terrible weather" that clouded his final stand. He calls the 1992 Trojans not a great team, but good enough to beat Fresno State.

He just couldn't get them inspired to play, even with his job on the line.

"I don't know ... the players just weren't excited to play," Smith says. "And, it's my fault because I'm the head coach. In some ways, it was kind of a comedown for them. I don't think they went out there and laid down, but I don't think they played a good game."

Future NFL quarterback Johnson was a mournful 7 of 18 passing for 95 yards and two interceptions.

The Trojans offense, though facing the 98th-ranked defense out of 107 teams in the nation, had 183 total yards of offense.

After such a meager effort in a whatever season, no one was surprised about Smith's exit.

"SC's a tough place to be a coach if you're not winning," says former Trojans offensive lineman Kris Pollack. "You could see the players were a little fed up with what was going on."

After taking one year off, Smith coached Missouri for seven seasons. He retired from coaching in 2000 before retiring when he was diagnosed with chronic lymphatic leukemia.

Chemotherapy and a lung infection cost Smith 30 pounds last year. Now living next to a country club golf course in Tucson, Ariz., the 66-year-old is "pretty much back to normal" and does some work as a color analyst for Fox Sports.

He'll be watching the Fresno State-USC replay from home, rooting for the Trojans.

"I appreciate what [USC coach] Pete Carroll is working under," Smith says. "It's not easy to be head coach at a school where you're expected to win every game. I maybe let the pressure get to me a bit. He's the guy to handle it."

A disappointed Dilfer

Dilfer remembers the events of game week.

Just not the fun ones, like team trips to Disneyland and Knotts Berry Farm.

"It's funny, I remember practicing down there at that junior college," says Dilfer, now the starting quarterback for the Cleveland Browns.

"By that time, you're so mentally beat up. Normally, bowl games, you have some fun ... There was no time off. Tough practices. It was even tougher than normal."

Sweeney made the players run "gassers" at the end of every practice: "I kept blowing my whistle until I ran out of breath," Sweeney says.

"The intensity Coach had all week," Dilfer says. "He knew that, if we'd play our game, we'd beat that team and it'd be great for the university. I remember him wanting the expectations to be high."

"They weren't going to let anything slip by."

Fresno State thought it could beat USC with the pass, and game-planned accordingly.

But a heavy rain at kickoff gave Dilfer maniacal fits throwing the ball. The strong-armed sophomore quarterback completed 13 of 28 passes for 164 yards.

With every overthrow that sailed beyond an open receiver downfield, and with each pass that clipped off an out-stretched receiver's fingers, television cameras zoomed in on Dilfer's animated gestures of anguish, including one helmet slam on the sideline.

"I just remember being so disappointed," Dilfer says. "I really never worried about winning at all. I didn't feel very good about my performance. The rain made it very hard to get a good grip on the ball."

Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't

"Offensively, we were superior to them. We felt we could score 45 points and we were disappointed we didn't. If we play that team 10 times, we beat them seven times."

Cal coach Jeff Tedford amens that. A former Fresno State quarterback, Tedford was in his first season on the Bulldogs' staff as a quarterbacks coach.

"We had a very good team in Fresno and nobody really knew it," Tedford says. "That game gave Trent a lot of confidence to play at that level of expectation against a team with the tradition of USC. He pretty much had it all going for him, anyway."

"That was icing on the cake."

Since being drafted in the first round in 1994, Dilfer has played 12 seasons in the NFL and won a Super Bowl ring with the Baltimore Ravens in the 2000 season.

Guess which postseason victory Dilfer hears about when he returns to Fresno?

"I get way more, 'Way to win the Freedom Bowl!' from fans here than I do about the Super Bowl, which I'm fine with," Dilfer says.

"At the time, I didn't think much about it when we beat SC. We had no idea what a big deal it was to the city until people later explained to me what a liberating experience that was."

Neal's night

The San Diego Chargers fullback bumped into former Bulldogs teammate Rus Hartmann at Thursday night's Fresno State-Boise State game.

The conversation quickly raced back to a day when Neal was a soon-to-be-drafted college senior and Hartmann was a junior offensive guard facing one of the nation's top run defenses.

It always does when these old friends meet.

"We talked about the SC game," says Neal, an NFL Pro Bowler whose Chargers had a bye this weekend.

"Whenever I run into the guys, that's what we'll talk about."

With great detail and a vivid smile, Neal rehashes a clash he had against Trojans linebacker Willie McGinest during a goal-line possession in the second quarter.

"I remember, I blocked Willie and he punched me in the face," Neal says. "I was like, 'All right, it's going to be like that?' "

"I remember getting the ball, hitting the guy, lifted him up and started dragging him. Then another guy jumped on me. [McGinest] was sliding back."

Neal shoved his way up the middle for a 1-yard touchdown to tie the game 7-7 in the second quarter. McGinest would hardly lay another All-American finger on him.

With tackles Jesse Hardwick and Ron Collins taking turns against standing up McGinest, and guards Hartman and Josh Coldiron pulling forward to clear large swaths of grass, the Bulldogs ran for 241 yards and three touchdowns.

Neal had 19 carries for 75 yards, twisting, churning and plowing forward on draws, counters and power plays each time.

His first-down run through multiple Trojans on 4th-and-1 in the fourth quarter all but sealed the victory.

"Once you get 4 yards a carry when it's 4th-and-1, and get a first down, you start to break down the defense," says Neal, the white in his eyes lighting up.

"We stayed consistently on them and kept putting it on them, kept pounding and pounding. It's a mind-set."

Normally, Neal was the lead blocker for an offense that ran to the weak side from an I-back formation.

The way USC stacked its eight-man front at the line of scrimmage, Sweeney used a T-Heavy formation with split running backs. Neal became the primary runner to the strong side, with speedy Ron Rivers serving as the lead blocker.

Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't

"Lorenzo was a batterer," Tedford says. "I remember us physically being dominant in that game."

By night's end, Neal was named the game's most valuable player.

"He never carried the ball that much in his life," Sweeney says. "He was unbelievable."

Old wounds never heal

Pollack loves to talk about his days of playing USC football, co-workers say at his chiropractic clinic in Lake Oswego, Ore.

Somehow, the conversation rarely veers to the last game of his sophomore year at Troy.

"That's still opening wounds up," Pollack says.

Pollack was the starting right guard for the Trojans in 1992, and played with a dislocated left shoulder the second half of the season.

Facing the Bulldogs, of all teams, was just as much a pain. Pollack spurned the recruiting efforts of current Fresno State coach Pat Hill, who at the time was Sweeney's offensive line coach.

USC, truth be told, simply thought it was too good to be playing Fresno State.

"A lot of us were disappointed," Pollack says. "A lot of guys kind of took the game off because they were hoping we were going to a bigger bowl. They took Fresno State lightly."

Pollack remembers walking into Anaheim Stadium and wondering if the game had been moved to Bulldog Stadium. The crowd colors were that red, the visiting fans' fervor that overwhelming.

"Probably the biggest thing was we're in our own back yard and there was more red and white than cardinal and gold."

When Pollack lined up at right guard, he looked up and saw former Clovis West teammate Brad Bell, making his first start at defensive end.

Pollack says the two went at it "hundreds of times at practice" in high school. That made this game's assignment special.

"I really remember going against Brad Bell, that brought back a lot of memories," Pollack says. "We probably talked a little trash back and forth but we were good friends."

Pollack played until his dislocated shoulder popped out midway through the second quarter: "You can say Brad pulled it out or something," he says with a laugh.

"We just had a great time smacking each other around," Bell says. "He smacked me pretty good, and hopefully, I smacked him pretty good."

Losing wasn't bad enough. Pollack had to return home to Fresno for the holidays immediately after the game.

To this day, Pollack, 33, gets grief when he returns to Fresno to see his parents and brother.

"I was hearing it from my friends even before the game," says Pollack, who is coming to town next week for Thanksgiving.

"I still hear people talking about the ~~SC-Fresno~~ State game and what happened in the Freedom Bowl ... I might have to cancel my [Thanksgiving] plans if Fresno State wins.

"Hopefully, it'll heal up some old wounds."

Sweet memories

Bell remembers every step of his way to the opening kickoff.

The march started in the team clubhouse underneath the stands, and led down a long tunnel that ended on the steps of a baseball dugout.

"You couldn't see anything until you came out of the dugout ... you just heard a roar," Bell says. "We didn't know if we were going to walk into a hostile crowd, a mass of maroon and gold."

Unforgettable; Bulldogs' 1992 Freedom Bowl victory over USC doesn't

The Fresno State kickers led the entourage of players, followed by the skill position players -- receivers, running backs, the secondary -- and quarterbacks.

Bell followed next with the linemen, who were ahead of the linebackers. He still gets goose bumps over what the dugout view revealed.

"As we stepped out of that tunnel, all you saw was red. They lit up in applause. It was one of the most amazing experiences I've ever had. We were absolutely taken in amazement by how many Bulldog faithful came on a pretty miserable night ... garbage bags covering red sweatshirts."

Bell was a junior who hadn't started a game all season. Defensive end Earl Oliver asked to start at linebacker for the first time in his four-year career, and that bumped Bell to the top of the depth chart.

"I remember it was a very special game for me because I finally got a chance to play," Bell says. "The recruiting coordinator from UCLA told me I'd never be big enough to play Division I football."

"I remember taking my first snaps against the maroon-and-gold, thinking, 'How's this for never playing Division I football?'"

Bell has served as Fresno State football's team chaplain for seven seasons, and he pastors a local church.

Having played in or attended all seven bowl games since the Freedom Bowl, he says none can compare.

"There's been all these bowl games, yet that's the one," Bell says.

"When I hear their song, when I see Tommy Trojan or whatever his name is, it's just such a sweet memory. It was such a special time in the history of Bulldogs football."

"There's just something about that Freedom Bowl."

The reporter can be reached at dwhite@fresnobee.com or (559) 441-6617.

GRAPHIC: FRESNO BEE FILE PHOTOS

Fresno State coach Jim Sweeney savors the Bulldogs' 24-7 victory over USC at the 1992 Freedom Bowl.

Trent Dilfer helped stun a USC team stocked with future NFL players.

Jim Sweeney

Larry Smith

Trent Dilfer

Lorenzo Neal

Brad Bell

FRESNO BEE FILE Fresno State running back Anthony Daigle powers into a USC defender during the Bulldogs' Freedom Bowl victory in 1992 that's still a vivid memory to fans and participants.

LOAD-DATE: November 14, 2005

Copyright 2005 Daily News, L.P.
Daily News (New York)

November 13, 2005 Sunday
SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 64

LENGTH: 766 words

HEADLINE: FAB FROSH SPARK USC

BYLINE: BY DICK WEISS

BODY:

BERKELEY, Calif. - It was a near-perfect day for college football on the hilly campus of the University of California yesterday.

The sun was out and the sky was so blue, you could see all the way from one side of the press box of aging Memorial Stadium across the San Francisco Bay to the Golden Gate Bridge. The view of Strawberry Canyon was equally impressive on the other side, with flocks of sea gulls flying over the stadium and fans who didn't have tickets to this sold-out Pac-10 game camped out among the evergreens on Tightwad Hill to watch their beloved Bears play top-ranked USC.

Hopefully, they enjoyed the gorgeous scenery because the Trojans (10-0, 7-0 Pac-10) took all the fun out of this one, defeating Cal - the last team to beat them, that back in 2003 - 35-10 yesterday to run their unbeaten streak to 32 games.

The win moved the Trojans, who have home games remaining against Fresno State and UCLA, one step closer toward a potential showdown with Texas in the BCS Championship Game. The national championship picture began to clear up after LSU beat previously undefeated and BCS third-ranked Alabama, 16-13, in overtime at Tuscaloosa.

USC senior quarterback Matt Leinart passed for 237 yards and scrambled for two touchdowns to reenergize his Heisman campaign in a game seen in New York and 65% of the country. Tailback LenDale White also rushed for three touchdowns.

"We struggled with Cal the last couple of years," Leinart said. "We wanted to come up here and make a statement.

"Our defense is getting better all the time. They forced six turnovers and you know when they do that, we're going to capitalize."

The Trojans' defense - with three kid linebackers - put this one away, limiting Jeff Tedford's normally high-powered team (6-4, 3-4) - which had been averaging 36 points - to 299 total yards and just one late touchdown.

"We're playing better 'D' than other teams in this conference," USC coach Pete Carroll said. "The conference is so darn loaded with offense. It's a chore on defense just to hold your own."

Carroll went with sophomore starter Keith Rivers and plugged in two precocious freshmen - former Bergen Catholic star Brian Cushing, a prep All-American and the best prospect in Jersey last year, and Rey Mauualuga - at the other two linebacker spots after learning that senior Oscar Lua would be out with a sprained knee and after losing Thomas Williams to injury in the first quarter.

The Trojans, who have by far the largest talent pool of any team in the country, didn't miss a beat, chewing up quarterback Joseph Ayoob, who threw four interceptions during a total meltdown. The 6-4, 235-pound Cushing, who wore his high school T-shirt underneath his uniform, led SC in tackles with seven. The 6-3, 250-pound Mauualuga, a prep All-

American from nearby Eureka, Calif., had six tackles and an interception for a defense that continued to grow after forcing Stanford to commit five turnovers last week in a 51-21 victory at the Coliseum.

"They just have to step up," SC defensive end Frostee Rucker said of the freshmen. "They have no choice. There is no slack. They know with a couple guys out they were going to have to play in big games."

This was Cushing's coming-out party. He had temporarily thought about red-shirting after suffering injuries to his shoulder and neck earlier in the season. "But," he said, "this was an opportunity to play with a great team. That's why I came here. I know I'm young and you're not supposed to play your first year. But I didn't want to listen to that. I think we might have the three fastest linebackers and our whole team speed picks up when we're in there."

Mauualuga, who had been demoted to the scout team and missed the first half of the Stanford game after he allegedly punched a man at a party and reportedly was released on \$20,000 bail after being charged with misdemeanor battery, wanted to thrive for other reasons.

His father, Takatonu, who is from Samoa, has been diagnosed with cancer after doctors discovered a large tumor growing in his chest. His condition is deteriorating, and Mauualuga had flown home to see him Monday night. He missed practice Tuesday and returned to the team the next day.

But he worries every day.

"My dad isn't able to watch the game," Mauualuga said. "I'm hoping one day he'll be better. He's not doing so good. It was my dad's dream for me to come here and play. I want to make him happy, even though he can't really communicate with me. He wanted me to do this and I'm going to do this for him."

"I'll check in with my family later. Right now, I'm leaving it up to God."

dweiss@nydailynews.com

GRAPHIC: GETTY Southern Cal quarterback Matt Leinart shows off football en route to running for touchdown in Trojans' 32nd consecutive victory.

LOAD-DATE: November 14, 2005

Copyright 2005 MediaNews Group, Inc.
Marin Independent Journal (Marin, CA)

November 16, 2005 Wednesday

SECTION: SPORTS

LENGTH: 725 words

HEADLINE: Dave Albee: Harris deserves credit for Stanford turnaround

BYLINE: Dave Albee

BODY:

STANFORD'S Walt Harris will be a Big Game rookie head coach for the 108th showdown Saturday, but he already knows that the annual Cal-Stanford football rivalry is bound to produce something odd and spectacular.

And we're not talking about The Play.

In 1976, Harris was the linebackers coach at Cal and he witnessed a strange sight he'd never before or since seen on the gridiron. In that Big Game, Stanford's players hoisted their head coach, Jack Christiansen, onto their shoulders and paraded about Memorial Stadium.

Onto to the field, not off. Before the game, not after.

"Oh my gosh," Harris said. "We're in trouble."

Christiansen had been fired on Nov. 19, the day before the Big Game, even though his team had won four of its previous five games. This turn of events inspired the Cardinal players to give their coach a fitting send-off. They lifted him onto their shoulders as a show of support and ultimately won the game in his honor. The Cardinal rotated Mike Cordova and Guy Benjamin at quarterback yet trailed 24-19 with 1:31 left in the game. But Cal's Markey Crane fumbled on the Bears two-yard line and Stanford's Ron Inge ended up scoring the winning touchdown

Berkeley became New Jack City.

Well, this Saturday will mark the 29th anniversary of Christiansen's firing and maybe the Stanford players, as a tribute, ought to carry Harris onto the field before the game. His team has won four of its last six games. He is riding a high and deserves some extra support and recognition.

"This is because I'm prejudice, but I think the story this year is the Pac-10 coaches voted us ninth in the league and the only team that was below us was Washington. So they voted us not to win a league game [because Stanford doesn't play Washington this season] and here we've won four," Stanford athletic director Ted Leland said. "You don't think that [USC's] Pete Carroll's not going to get [Pac-10] coach of the year, but it might be Walt. His team took the biggest leap."

After losses to UC Davis and Oregon this season, the Cardinal had lost seven of their last eight games, five of those under Buddy Teevens. Teevens, fired by Stanford, is now head coach at Dartmouth [2-7 record this season] and it appeared his leftovers at Stanford would remain a lot of losers.

Harris changed the Cardinal from laughable to likeable. Even though Cal, losers in four of its last five games, is a four-point favorite to beat Stanford in Stanford Stadium this Saturday, the prevailing opinion of neutral observers in the Bay Area is the Cardinal are quite capable of pulling the upset, making Cal the brunt of jokes.

"They've done a good job of rebounding," said Cal fullback Chris Manderino. "That's what we have to do now."

Dave Albee: Harris deserves credit for Stanford turnaround Marin Indepen

Stanford won last Saturday at Oregon State even though it played most of the second half without two starting offensive linemen and two starting wide receivers and without its starting tight end, fullback and quarterback. Cal contained Heisman Trophy contender Reggie Bush of USC in its game last Saturday but the Bears offense struggled so mightily in a 35-10 defeat that Bears coach Jeff Tedford - who could become the first Cal coach since Andy Smith in 1921 to win his first four Big Games against Stanford - may start Steve Levy over Joe Ayooob at quarterback.

Levy, who came to Cal as a quarterback then switched to fullback last year before switching back, led the Bears to their only touchdown against the Trojans. He stepped into the huddle and asked his teammates "to believe in me."

"He said a few weeks ago that even if he got in for one play against SC it would make his whole career," Manderino said. "He's played, I don't know, 50 different positions. He just wants to get on the field and play."

The play of the starting quarterbacks in the Big Game could be pivotal because both of them may have been back-ups last week. The swollen injured left thumb of Stanford starting quarterback Trent Edwards on Monday looked like a Lean Cuisine Hot Pocket. If he can't take snaps, T.C. Ostrander would start at QB.

Thus the big storyline in this Big Game could be the big play -pro or con - delivered by either Ayooob, Levy, Edwards or Ostrander. That makes predicting the outcome of this Big Game unpredictable. That means something odd and spectacular is bound to happen.

Someone's in trouble.

LOAD-DATE: November 16, 2005

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Copyright 2005 The Miami Herald
The Miami Herald (Florida)

November 17, 2005, Thursday

SECTION: SPORTS

KR-ACC-NO: K4641

LENGTH: 407 words

HEADLINE: Some college football capsules and picks

BYLINE: By Jeff Shain

BODY:

JEFF SHAIN'S PREDICTIONS

Miami 37, Georgia Tech 16: Hurricane Wilma postponement probably helped Miami, as QB Kyle Wright was nursing a sprained thumb when game originally was set. Last week's five-TD outing vs. Wake Forest seems to remove any lingering concern. With BCS marbles to play for, motivation won't be a worry. (Favorite: UM by 17-[-])

Auburn 17, Alabama 13: What could be worse for Bama than getting knocked out of the Rose Bowl chase? How about a fourth straight loss in the Iron Bowl? Tigers have one of the SEC's two legit offenses, and struggling Tide again will find it difficult to keep pace. (Favorite: Auburn by 7.)

Ohio State 26, Michigan 17: Wolverines have tallied 74 points in past two games, but did it at the expense of two of the Big Ten's worst defenses. RB Mike Hart (ankle) could return after missing the past 2-[-] games, but he will find tough sledding against OSU's A.J. Hawk & Co. (Favorite: OSU by 3.)

Penn State 27, Michigan State 14: Anyone seen the Spartans' offense? The same attack that got them to 4-0 seems to have dried up with a combined 39 points the past two weeks. JoePa's boys are fresh after open date and still need victory here to lock up unexpected Big Ten crown. (Favorite: PSU by 7.)

Texas Tech 34, Oklahoma 28: Once-vaunted Sooners defense hasn't given up fewer than 24 points in past month, and that came vs. sputtering Nebraska. That leaves QB Rhett Bomar trying to keep up with Red Raiders attack smarting from last week's upset by Oklahoma State. (Favorite: Tech by 7.)

Southern California 41, Fresno State 21: Trojans needed a challenge to keep sharp with UCLA still two weeks off, and Bulldogs should fill the role nicely. QB Paul Pinegar should dent SC defense for a couple of TDs, but WAC slate can't prepare you for Leinart/Bush/White triumvirate. (Favorite: USC by 23-[-])

South Carolina 20, Clemson 17: First Tennessee, then the Gators. Now the chance to torment a Bowden (Tommy) in the regular-season finale. Is Steve Spurrier loving this stretch or what? Stats point to Clemson, but does anyone dare go against the Ol' Ball Coach's mojo now? (Favorite: Clemson by 2-[-])

—
Last week: 4-3. It's too long to detail here, but bad karma from a 1990s gig in South Carolina must still have ways of finding me. Against spread: 3-3-1.

Season: 44-28 (37-33-1 vs. spread).

Some college football capsules and picks The Miami Herald (Florida) Nove

Visit The Miami Herald Web edition on the World Wide Web at <http://www.herald.com/>

JOURNAL-CODE: MI

LOAD-DATE: November 17, 2005

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Fresno Bee (California)

November 22, 2005 Tuesday
FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. D1

LENGTH: 612 words

HEADLINE: Hill bullish over future;
Coach says USC game indicative of how team's expectations have grown.

BYLINE: Bryant-Jon Anteola The Fresno Bee

BODY:

Pat Hill repeated the message he's been sending the past nine years.

Except this time, at his Monday news conference, the Fresno State coach spoke with more authority and optimism.

His message: It's time to believe Fresno State will become a national football power.

"What we're trying to do is not just talk anymore," Hill said. "Hopefully people see it's not just a pipe dream. It can happen here."

It almost did Saturday night in Los Angeles.

The Bulldogs nearly shocked the nation when they went down to the wire with top-ranked USC before losing 50-42 to the two-time defending national champion.

Fresno State remained No. 16 in all three major polls but dropped two spots to No. 19 in the latest Bowl Championship Series standings.

On the heels of the near-upset, Hill looked to seize the moment and build additional support, wanting to turn doubters into believers. He also appeared ready to move past the loss to USC, turning his attention not only to Saturday's game against Nevada but the Bulldogs' future.

Fresno State can secure at least a share of its first Western Athletic Conference title since 1999 with a win Saturday.

The Bulldogs might have gained momentum on the recruiting front with the loss to USC, a team that has been heralded as one of college football's best ever.

Fresno State is on the verge of playing in its seventh straight bowl game.

And 18 starters are expected to return next season for a nonconference schedule that has Oregon and Colorado State playing at Bulldog Stadium.

There's also a trip to Seattle to meet Washington of the Pac-10.

"The ride's not over," Hill said. "We've got big things coming up in the future. We feel that we have improved our program to a level [that] we're not just a sideshow or a Cinderella story.

"We need to sell that. The grass isn't always greener somewhere else. We've got to make our grass greener. Everyone has got to push together to go to the next level."

Hill bullish over future; Coach says USC game indicative of how team'

Hill spoke of expansion at Bulldog Stadium, getting 500 businesses to donate \$10,000 each to support Fresno State athletics through the Green V Foundation and the importance of national exposure.

"I think we are the porch light of this university and this community," Hill said. "If we shine brightly, it shines brightly on all of us in the entire Valley.

"There's a lot of strength here if we unite. And that's what I think Fresno State football can do for this community.

" Saturday night helped us earn some points. But you've got to keep winning."

Usually after defeats, Hill limits his thoughts to the upcoming team.

But Hill said the Bulldogs' performance against USC validated his vision and direction of the program.

Both of Fresno State's losses, which include a 37-34 defeat at Oregon, have come against programs ranked in the top eight.

In those matchups, the Bulldogs have amassed 76 points but have been outscored by a combined 11 points.

In comparison, No. 6 Notre Dame (8-2) lost to USC 34-31 and No. 8 Oregon (10-1) lost to the Trojans 45-13.

"The bottom line is for us to win, and we didn't do that," Hill said.

"But who's the biggest win for Notre Dame this year -- their loss to SC or against 7-4 Michigan? Who do you think Oregon is pumping its chest about beating? It's us.

"I'm not one to think we're stopping [because of] the loss Saturday night," Hill said. "It gives us a chance to build a stronger bridge to the future. Hopefully, this stuff will start coming to fruition.

"There's a lot of neat things on the horizon for us."

The reporter can be reached at banteola@fresnobee.com or (559) 441-6362.

INFOBOX

Hittin' the road

NO. 16 FRESNO STATE AT NEVADA

Saturday: 4 p.m. at Mackay Stadium

Records: Bulldogs (8-2, 6-0); Wolf Pack (7-3, 6-1)

TV: ESPN2

NOTES: INFOBOX

GRAPHIC: TOMAS OVALLE/THE FRESNO BEE

The Bulldogs came a handful of plays from stripping Reggie Bush and USC of the Trojans' 32-game winning streak. On Monday, coach Pat Hill said Fresno State is moving toward becoming a perennial power.

"What we're trying to do is not just talk anymore. Hopefully people see it's not just a pipe dream. It can happen here." - Pat Hill, on the Bulldogs becoming a national power

LOAD-DATE: November 22, 2005

Copyright 2005 Daily News, L.P.
Daily News (New York)

December 1, 2005 Thursday
SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 84

LENGTH: 934 words

HEADLINE: QBS FIGHT FOR L.A. BRUINS' OLSON TARGETS LEINART

BYLINE: BY DICK WEISS

BODY:

LOS ANGELES - Drew Olson knows he is the other quarterback in this town.

He has gotten used to the fact that USC's Matt Leinart, who won a Heisman Trophy last year and has two national championship rings, is college football's cover boy.

Leinart is a photogenic, young, Hollywood celebrity from the O.C. who has received most of the attention leading up to what should be an emotional final regular-season home game against crosstown Pac-10 rival UCLA Saturday at the L.A. Coliseum.

Leinart has completed 66.4% of his passes for 3,217 yards and 24 touchdowns and has six 300-yard games for the top-ranked Trojans (11-0), who are one win away from playing in the Jan. 4 BCS championship game at the Rose Bowl.

"I'm not at his status," the Bruins' senior QB admitted. "I've met him on media day but I've never really talked with him."

The 6-3, 225-pound Olson can walk the UCLA campus without being recognized. "I enjoy the streets of Westwood," he said.

Olson is not from around here. He is from Piedmont High in the Bay area, but it hasn't taken him long to realize that the 11th-ranked Bruins (9-1) - who are 22-point underdogs - can make a huge statement for their program with a victory. Not only can they grab a share of the Pac-10 championship, they also can severely cut into the gap that has existed between the two programs.

USC has beaten the Bruins six straight times, putting a strain on this neighborhood rivalry. Already this week, several Trojan players claimed it was no more significant than any other game on their schedule.

"If they don't feel it's that important, we're just going to have to change their mind," said UCLA All-America tight end Mercedes Lewis. "If we have to score 42 points to win, or 56, that's what we have to do."

There is some thought that UCLA could play its way into the BCS picture with a win over the Trojans. "The Bowl game is nothing to me," Olson said. "To beat SC is the ultimate goal."

Olson may not have Leinart's credentials, but he has better statistics. Olson leads the country in pass efficiency and has better stats than Leinart, completing 67.7% of his passes for 2,909 yards, 30 touchdowns and only three interceptions. He threw for six touchdowns against Oregon State, has led his team to four fourth-quarter comebacks, and just last Saturday passed for 510 yards and five touchdowns as the Bruins beat Arizona State, 45-35, at the Rose Bowl.

"Matt has done a great job," UCLA coach Karl Dorrell said. "Drew came from nowhere, from a point where he had no expectations heading into the season to one where people are now asking, 'Who is the best quarterback in L.A.?' He's gained respect."

QBS FIGHT FOR L.A. BRUINS' OLSON TARGETS LEINART Daily News (New Yo

Olson didn't know if he would even be playing after he tore two ligaments in his left knee last December in the Las Vegas Bowl. "That was the first time I wasn't able to get up after an injury," he said.

Olson underwent aggressive surgery and intense rehab and surprised Dorrell when he was cleared to play in June. He has been the catalyst of a high-tech West Coast offense that also features two All-Americans - running back/return specialist Maurice Drew and Lewis, a leading candidate for the Mackey Award - and is averaging 40 points and 441 yards per game. Olson, who has increased his knowledge of the offense and improved his arm strength, has played his way from free agent status to a probable first-day NFL draft pick.

USC is averaging 48.5 points and 571.3 yards and could feast on UCLA's porous run defense, but the Bruins are hardly in awe. They were 6-4 entering this game last year, but threatened to pull off an upset before falling just short in a 29-24 loss at the Rose Bowl. SC needed 335 yards of total offense and touchdown runs of 81 and 65 yards by tailback Reggie Bush to hold on.

The Bruins are healthy for this one. SC could be hampered by the fact that punishing running back LenDale White - the thunder to Bush's lightning - suffered a shoulder bruise in practice on Sunday when he was tackled during a drill. White did not practice on Tuesday but said he should be ready to go.

One for the Roses

Second-ranked Texas seemingly has the easier road to the BCS championship game. All the Longhorns (11-0) have to do is beat Colorado (7-4) Saturday in the Big 12 championship game in Houston.

"We can smell the Roses," said Texas' All-American quarterback Vince Young.

Young had a career game against the Buffs the first time the two teams met this season. Young ran for three touchdowns and completed 25 of 29 passes for 336 yards as the Longhorns raced to a 35-10 halftime lead en route to a 42-17 victory in Austin.

"If we win this game, we're going to the national championship," All-America safety Michael Huff said. "We're not overlooking anybody, but we do see what's down the road."

One quick history lesson: Texas has been in a similar position with a BCS invite on the line twice before. The Longhorns defeated Nebraska in their first meeting in 1999, then lost to the Huskers in a rematch. But their most heart-breaking loss came in 2001. Texas had beaten Colorado, 41-7, in the regular season, then lost to the Buffs, 39-37, in the Big 12 title game.

Had Texas won that game, the Horns would have played Miami for the BCS championship at the Rose Bowl. Just before kickoff, Tennessee upset Florida in the SEC championship game and a staff member stuck his head in the locker room and yelled, "This is for the national championship."

"Our players all heard it and they almost ran me over on the way to the field," Texas coach Mack Brown said. "They were so excited, we didn't play very well."

GRAPHIC: OUR EXPERTS CALL THE SHOTS

dweiss@nydailynews.com

GRAPHIC: AP Drew Olson leads Bruins into L.A. Coliseum with eye toward upset.

LOAD-DATE: December 1, 2005

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Los Angeles Times

December 3, 2005 Saturday
Home Edition

SECTION: CALIFORNIA; Metro; Metro Desk; Part B; Pg. 1

LENGTH: 1167 words

HEADLINE: CROSSTOWN RIVALRY;

Rah, Rah -- Boo, Hiss;

In the run-up to today's USC-UCLA game, split loyalties among spouses, colleagues, even business partners lead to high jinks. All's in fun, right?

BYLINE: Bob Pool, Times Staff Writer

BODY:

The pint-size marching band stopped outside the USC teacher's classroom Friday and boldly belted out the UCLA fight song.

On that note, today's big-time, crosstown football rivalry that has divided homes and businesses got even more personal at Palms Middle School on the Westside.

Band teacher Julie West, a UCLA alumna, was tweaking colleague Patti Mullen, an English and history teacher and a USC grad, as West led 50 musicians in a rousing rendition of "Sons of Westwood" outside Mullen's door.

"You guys sound great, \o7despite\7 the song you were playing," Mullen said with a laugh after the youngsters finished with the traditional "U-C-L-A !" shout.

Mullen was wearing a cardinal-and-gold USC sweatshirt. Similarly attired was physical education teacher Janiece Phillipp when the band stopped by the gym to serenade her.

"That song brings back a lot of memories," said Phillipp, who graduated from USC in 1972 but has regularly attended Trojan-Bruin football games since 1968.

West played in the UCLA marching band before graduating in 1978. She brought in 30 vintage Bruin T-shirts and band jackets Friday for her music class students to wear.

Only one pupil declined the invitation: Clarinet player Adriana Bautista, an eighth-grader, stubbornly wore her own USC shirt. "I like USC better," she said.

There was no chance, however, that Adriana would be able to perform the Trojan song "Fight On."

"We've never played it," West said. "I don't allow it."

Old-school loyalists across Los Angeles said that testing allegiances is an autumn tradition each time the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles, face off on the football field.

At the USC campus, teaching assistant Marat Ahmetzanov pinned a UCLA pennant to his office wall. Next to it he displayed ticket stubs from Bruin football games he has attended this season.

A UCLA alumnus who is now a graduate student in clinical psychology at USC, he said he isn't conflicted about who he's rooting for.

CROSSTOWN RIVALRY; Rah, Rah -- Boo, Hiss; In the run-up to today's

UCLA has won every game this year that he's attended, he said. "And I'll be at the Coliseum on Saturday, sitting on the UCLA side."

USC sophomore and psychology major Trevor Cushman shook his head disapprovingly at the pennant.

"It's a crying shame, a disgrace. It sullies up the whole building," said Cushman, who works in Ahmetzanov's clinical labs.

In Beverly Hills, the co-owners of the Color Me Mine ceramics studio had all but painted a double-sided cardinal-and-gold and blue-and-gold line down the middle of their South Beverly Drive shop.

Fred Anderson graduated from USC in 1995. Bobby Zolekhian got his degree from UCLA in 1996. Both were predicting victory for their schools today.

"Unfortunately, Bob went to UCLA. It was the best he could do," said Anderson, a Mid-Wilshire resident who has a ticket to today's game. "If SC loses, I'm sure he'll show up with every Bruin sweatshirt and hat and pair of boxer shorts that he owns, and I'll have to wear them all next week. That will be ugly."

Zolekhian, who lives in Beverly Hills, said he frequently brings his paid-off college loan papers to wave in Anderson's face -- "to rub it in," as he put it. He said he will be manning the store at game time but plans to monitor the Coliseum matchup.

"I'll keep text-messaging Fred to try to distract him from the game," he said with a laugh.

The game's outcome will determine which of the partners wins a water bottle that holds loose change that has accumulated in the cash register over the last several years. The winner will get to pick the charity that will get the estimated \$250, Zolekhian said.

There was a split down the middle of the Donatucci household in Manhattan Beach too. Colleen Donatucci graduated from USC in 1985. Mark Donatucci graduated from UCLA in 1988. She'll be sitting at the 48-yard line on the Trojan side of the Coliseum this afternoon. He'll be on the Bruin side -- in the peristyle area of the stadium.

"When SC is playing in the Coliseum, they stick us in the end zone," said Mark, a food-processing company operations manager.

Colleen said her husband "has indoctrinated" the couple's two boys -- Michael, 9, and Matthew, 7 -- to be UCLA fans.

She struck back at Halloween, dressing up the pair's twin 5-year-old girls, Kelly and Caitlin, in matching USC cheerleader outfits. "He went wild when he saw them," she said of Mark.

Such garments, along with souvenir Trojan sweatshirts and hats, were flying off the shelves at the USC student store. The shop's second-floor area was decorated with small stuffed bears wearing tiny UCLA shirts. Each was hanging by one leg from strings suspended from the ceiling.

Amy Grat, a Glendale resident married to a USC alumnus, was purchasing a bear outfitted with the USC logo to send to a friend in Japan.

Asked why -- whatever the logo might be -- she was nonetheless buying a stuffed version of the UCLA symbol, she explained: "This is not a 107Bruin 17bear, it's a teddy bear. I'm not buying a UCLA bear. I want to stay civil."

Across town, the biggest seller in the UCLA student store was a \$17 T-shirt bearing the phrase, "My 2 favorite teams are the UCLA Bruins and whoever is playing USC."

"We're almost sold out," apologized store clerk and junior history major Vanessa Diaz as she surveyed the nearly empty display case. "These are all we have left."

Acknowledging that "emotions do run high at this time on our campuses," USC President Steven B. Sample and UCLA Chancellor Albert Carnesale jointly issued a Rodney King-like "can't we all just get along?" plea for peace during and after today's game.

"Let's make this year's UCLA-USC football game a safe, respectful and fun experience for everyone," the pair wrote in a signed "open letter to the USC and UCLA communities" published in the Daily Bruin and Daily Trojan student newspapers.

CROSSTOWN RIVALRY; Rah, Rah -- Boo, Hiss; In the run-up to today's

Not that there was any danger of unrest at the Altadena home of Ned Martorana -- a composer and restaurant owner who studied music for five years at USC and three years at UCLA. He's quietly decided to root for UCLA today.

"I felt more at home at UCLA, even though USC had a better music department. I liked the all-around atmosphere at UCLA. I feel more kinship with it," said Martorana, who didn't graduate from either place.

Back at Palms Middle School, meantime, math teacher Nadine Shulman, a 1972 UCLA graduate, was wearing the Trojan cardinal and gold instead of Bruin blue and gold.

"I've converted to the dark side," she joked, explaining that her husband, Dr. Ira Shulman, is a professor of medicine at USC.

Despite her current leanings, Shulman applauded heartily as the band finished its last rendition of "Sons of Westwood."

Alto sax player Jacob Gray, a sixth-grader, smiled broadly, displaying a temporary tattoo on his cheek that read, "Beat SC." He said he had it applied to his face at Thursday night's UCLA bonfire.

Eighth-grade trumpet player Zach Reisler proudly adjusted the official UCLA marching band tunic that West loaned him.

"This is so awesome," Zach said. "This is an honor."

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GRAPHIC: PHOTO: TAKING SIDES: Zach Reisler, Emily Patton and Will Furuyama, from left, and the rest of the Palms Middle School band play the Bruin fight song "Sons of Westwood" on Friday. Band teacher and UCLA alumna Julie West was the ringleader of the prank. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Photographs by Al Seib Los Angeles Times **PHOTO: GOTCHA:** Teacher and USC grad Patti Mullen is one target of the musical ribbing. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Al Seib Los Angeles Times **PHOTO: IN THE SPIRIT:** Alto saxophone player Jacob Gray says he got the temporary tattoo at the UCLA bonfire Thursday night. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Al Seib Los Angeles Times

LOAD-DATE: December 3, 2005

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The New York Post

December 7, 2005 Wednesday

SECTION: All Editions; Pg. 65

LENGTH: 432 words

HEADLINE: NCAA GRID LEGENDS ARE BACKING BUSH

BYLINE: SAM BLAKE

BODY:

Southern California star Reggie Bush has dominated college football all season - even on a Tuesday morning from across the country.

The buzz in the Waldorf-Astoria wasn't just about the 11 former college standouts and two legendary coaches who were officially inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame last night. There was ample discussion about the Heisman race.

"Reggie Bush will win it, and I think he should win it. He's the most exciting runner maybe I've ever seen," said Paul Wiggins, Stanford's dominating two-way lineman and the elder statesman among the honorees. "I played every game Jim Brown ever played. And maybe he'll always be the greatest runner that ever played . . . but I think Reggie Bush has so much excitement to what he does that he's in a class by himself."

Wiggins was drafted by the Cleveland Browns in 1957 along with Brown. "[They] are different. Jim Brown, when people got him, he just beat them off. He was a man," emphasized Wiggins, clenching his fists. "You don't get your hands on [Bush], he freezes people in the open field."

Last night's inductees were All-Americans Cornelius Bennett (LB, Alabama 1983-86), Tom Curtis (DB, Michigan, 1967-69), Anthony Davis (RB, USC, 1972-74), Keith Dorney (OT, Penn St. 1975-78), Jim Houston, (E, Ohio St., 1957-59), John Huarte (QB, Notre Dame, 1962-64), Roosevelt Leaks (FB, Texas, 1972-74), Mark May (OT, Pittsburgh, 1977-80), Joe Washington (RB, Oklahoma, 1972-75), Paul Wiggins (DT, Stanford, 1954-56) and David Williams (WR, Illinois, 1983-85). Coaches Pat Dye (E. Carolina, Wyoming, Auburn, 153-62-5) and Don Nehlen (Bowling Green, W. Va., 202-128-8) were also honored.

"Even though I'm a SC guy I look at it objectively as a former player who was in the running for the Heisman," said Davis, a major part of four Trojan title teams - two football and two baseball (in 1974 Davis was the Heisman runner-up to Ohio State's Archie Griffin). "If [Bush] doesn't play the way he does against Notre Dame, Arizona State, Fresno State and possibly Oregon, SC has two or three losses. When [QB Vince] Young was down against Oklahoma State, if Texas doesn't have him, they lose. That's one game, Reggie did it three times."

Washington said there is a snag to Bush locking up the award, "You got two guys from the same team in Southern Cal that are definitely deserving. Maybe I'm a biased, I always feel running backs are the guys who are basically the heart and soul of football teams."

Leaks agrees.

"Vince had a great year, but Reggie had another step above him," said Leaks. "I think he'll edge [Vince] out."

LOAD-DATE: December 7, 2005

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THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (California)

December 29, 2005 Thursday
FINAL Edition

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. D1

LENGTH: 491 words

HEADLINE: Cal will find out how good USC is

BYLINE: Jake Curtis, Chronicle Staff Writer

BODY:

Cal opens its Pac-10 season tonight at 7:30, although the Bears don't know who their opponent will be.

Officially, Cal (6-3) plays USC (9-2) at the Staples Center, but the Trojans defy description at this point.

We know that USC was picked by the media to finish last in the Pac-10 under first-year coach Tim Floyd. We also know that last week, USC handed then-No. 17 North Carolina its worst loss since the 2002-2003 season. And we know that a USC win tonight would give the Trojans their first 10-game winning streak since the 1970-71 season, when USC, led by Paul Westphal, went 24-2, losing only to UCLA.

Has USC suddenly, inexplicably put it all together, as Washington did two years ago? Or are we reading too much into the Trojans' upset of North Carolina, which is their only significant win?

Arizona coach Lute Olson says "SC is for real," but Floyd remains guarded.

"I'm hesitant to anoint this team at this point, because I have vivid memories of the first two games," Floyd said.

USC lost to Cal State Northridge and Oral Roberts but has clamped down defensively since, holding six of its next nine opponents under 60 points.

Two years ago, Washington was 5-8 overall, 0-5 in the Pac-10 and expected to finish eighth or worse in the conference for the fifth straight season. The Huskies are 56-10 since.

As Washington did two years ago, the Trojans rely on their perimeter players. The Trojans' suspect inside game got weaker last week when 6-10 freshman RouSean Cromwell, who had started five games, was lost for at least a month with a knee injury.

USC uses what amounts to a four-guard lineup, which creates interesting matchups for the Bears, who depend on their big men. The Bears will try to exploit USC's lack of size inside, and the Trojans will try to use their quickness on the perimeter.

"It depends on which one prevails," Cal forward Leon Powe said.

If the Bears play man-to-man defense, one of Cal's big men, probably 6-11 DeVon Hardin, will have to guard USC's 6-6 swingman Nick Young, who leads the team in scoring (16.2) and rebounding (6.1). That is a difficult assignment for Hardin, but it would be tough for Young to guard Hardin too, which is why one or both teams may use zone defenses.

In any case, the Trojans probably will send several defenders at Powe whenever he gets the ball, a strategy that Kansas and DePaul used successfully while handing Cal losses in its final two nonconference games.

Cal will find out how good USC is THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE (Californi

Powe says his response will be to crash the offensive boards harder, while trying to prevent the letdowns that have plagued the Bears.

"When things break down, we've been going our different ways, and it only takes two or three minutes like that to ruin a game," Powe said.

Although Cal finished ahead of USC in the Pac-10 standings last season, USC beat Cal decisively in both meetings by margins of 17 and 19 points.

Tonight's games

Who: Cal (6-3) at USC (9-2)

When: 7:30 p.m.

TV/Radio: Comcast

SportsNet/1550 AM

GRAPHIC: PHOTO

Nick Young's a tough matchup for the Bears. / Danny Moloshok / Associated Press

LOAD-DATE: December 29, 2005

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The Denver Post

December 30, 2005 Friday
FINAL EDITION

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. D-12

LENGTH: 723 words

HEADLINE: Longhorns not only Herd at Rose Bowl

BYLINE: John Henderson

BODY:

Los Angeles - They used to call USC the University of Spoiled Children for a reason. All you had to do was attend a USC football game. Biff would drive his BMW in from Orange County and drink his chardonnay and eat his brie at his tailgate party while discussing his latest stock purchase.

They were a bunch of arrogant front-runners who thumbed their noses at everyone else in the Pac-10 while their football team wallowed in periods of mediocrity that wouldn't be acceptable in Pullman, Wash.

An ugly generalization? Sure. But this doesn't just come from me. It comes from USC fans. The new USC fans.

"That stereotype was accurate in the mid '90s," booster Charles Morris said Wednesday night. "In the late '90s there was no

stereotype because no one was supporting the program."

Sure there were. Just not many of them, and none like Morris and his friends. The 1988 USC grad from Glendale, Calif., is an executive board member of the Thundering Herd, a booster group that has transformed the L.A. Memorial Coliseum from a mausoleum to the Colosseum - like the one in Rome where opponents knew they were dead before they walked through the tunnel. And if teams don't believe it, 350 members of the Thundering Herd, surrounding the tunnel like vultures hovering over carrion, will let them know.

And they travel well. The founder, Shorty Clarke, travels from Idaho for every home game. There are members who come in from as far as New York. You can bet they'll travel the 13 miles to Pasadena on Wednesday for the Rose Bowl, where their beloved top-ranked Trojans meet No. 2 Texas for the national title.

The Thundering Herd, named for coach Howard Jones' national championship teams in 1928 and 1931, arrived about the time coach Pete Carroll did in 2001. It's not a coincidence. Carroll replaced Paul Hackett, a career NFL assistant who took John Robinson's .500 program and drove it into eighth place in the Pac-10.

The USC crowds were as dull as the team, barely averaging 58,000 fans in Hackett's 2000 swan song. Put 58,000 in the 92,000-seat Memorial Coliseum and USC has a similar home-field advantage to Dorsey High.

"There would be 10-15,000 of the other team's fans," Morris said. "And they're louder and they're yelling more than Trojan fans. If we stood up, other Trojan fans were yelling for us to sit down."

Morris, a program director in social services, had enough. He and similarly disgruntled Trojan fans rallied on uscfootball.com. They began to complain and organized their tickets to surround the Coliseum tunnel. The Thundering Herd was born.

They started with 150 on one side of the tunnel. It has more than doubled and no one not wearing cardinal and gold has a seat near it.

"Now we horseshoe the tunnel," Morris said. "We're yelling, 'We are SC!' We pump up our team as they come out. We try to be intimidating as the other team comes out and not be profane. But we make clear one thing: This isn't an easy place to play."

It isn't. Everyone talks about USC's 34-game win streak. People forget it also has a Pac-10 record 27-game home win streak dating to Carroll's fourth game as Trojan coach. Last year's conference record of 85,229 fans a game was broken this year with 90,812.

With the haze of L.A.'s dusk cloaking the field and the din of 90,000 fans echoing in the ears of opponents trying to stay within a ZIP code of Reggie Bush, the L.A. Coliseum is truly suffocating and one of the great places to watch a game in the U.S.

Don't expect the same atmosphere Wednesday. Don't expect the home-field advantage Louisiana State had against Oklahoma two seasons ago when the Superdome, 80 miles down the road in New Orleans, was about 80-20 LSU fans.

The Rose Bowl's 88,506-seat capacity is about 16,000 more than the Superdome and the Rose Bowl's vast configuration makes the Coliseum sound like the old Boston Garden. Both USC and Texas were allotted 22,000 tickets, but Texas fans are buying the extras in hordes. Pac-10 spokesman Jim Muldoon estimates it will be about 55-45 USC fans, hardly a bigger advantage than Bush's feet.

But the Thundering Herd will do its best.

"We can bring a lot of that energy to the Rose Bowl," Marshall said. "I was there two years ago when we played Michigan. The crowd was rocking. I foresee that happening for Texas."

John Henderson can be reached at 303-820-1299 or jhenderson@denverpost.com.

LOAD-DATE: December 30, 2005

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The Sporting News

December 30, 2005

SECTION: COLLEGE FOOTBALL; insider; Pg. 44

LENGTH: 585 words

HEADLINE: 'Twas the night before the offseason

BYLINE: MATT HAYES

BODY:

The best time of year, huh? How about the worst time, with the reality of eight long, dreary months ahead until a new season begins. So for one week, I'm the man in the red suit, doling out gifts to those in need. To USC coach Pete Carroll: common sense. Who cares if some NFL bigwig flirts with you and offers \$ 6 million a year, complete control of personnel and staff and all the other stuff those gazillionaire owners like to pimp. You've got it good, Petey. The machine recruits itself, you're in a winnable (read: poor) conference, and you're closing in on college football greatness (Oklahoma's 47-game winning streak). Don't do it, man. Don't do it.

To V-Young: another year in college. V, babe, I know the NFL is filling your head with big dreams and big dollars. But in the NFL, you won't get 4 or 5 seconds to set and throw; you'll get about 1.8. In the NFL, nearly everyone runs as fast as you. In the NFL, your passing skills, albeit drastically improved from the past two seasons, will leave you running for your very life on almost every play. Stay awhile, will ya? Continue to progress as a passer and be the No. 1 overall pick in 2007. To the Ohio State coaching staff: a book--The Art of Using your Star Player, by noted tactician Sun Tzu. For the love of God, send someone to Indianapolis this summer and ask Colts offensive guru Tom Moore how he gets Marvin Harrison open on every play. Then use those ideas to get Ted Ginn open on every play. You know, the really fast guy on your team. To the Texas A&M administration: a bag full of cash. To buy out Dennis Franchione's contract.

To Oregon: a subtle suggestion. The Fiesta Bowl, presented by Nike.

To LSU fans: a trip. To Shuteville. Yeah, we know Southern California didn't win the BCS national title after the 2003 season. The Trojans did, however, win the Associated Press national championship, which is why they're working on three in a row. It's the same AP national title LSU won in 1958. So if you're willing to give up your '58 title, I'm sure SC can part with its '03. Capisce?

To new Colorado coach Dan Hawkins: disinfectant. Scrub, wash, repeat.

To Arizona quarterback Willie Tuitama: a big trophy case. There's a bronze award in your future, kid.

To West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez: a signature victory. An upset win over Georgia in the Sugar Bowl and a top five ranking at the start of next season. OK, Santa can't make everything happen.

To Urban Meyer: a reminder. Father's Day is the third Sunday in June. Love, Daddy Ballcoach.

To Lloyd Carr: NFL fantasies. Of Jim Tressel walking the sideline in Cleveland.

To Fresno State coach Pat Hill: a new credo. Let's win the WAC!

To Joe Pa: eternal youth. Wait, you already have it. TSN SPEED READS

I've always wondered why San Diego State hasn't been a consistently successful program. San Diego is one of America's best cities, the Mountain West is a winnable conference, and the recruiting base is the state of California. Maybe new coach Chuck Long is the answer, but one thing is clear: The job is either a tombstone or a steppingstone.

'Twas the night before the offseason The Sporting News December 30,

Seriously, what is Turner Gill doing at Buffalo? I think it's fantastic that Buffalo hired Gill as the nation's fifth black coach, but who in his right mind would want to step into that void? Buffalo is the hardest place in the nation to recruit to, and despite its huge strides over the past five seasons, the MAC still is the Great Unknown once you get past its four or five prominent teams.

LOAD-DATE: December 22, 2005

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San Antonio Express-News

December 30, 2005 Friday
METRO Edition

SECTION: SPORTS; Pg. 10C

LENGTH: 538 words

HEADLINE: Lost in the lights

BYLINE: Jeff McDonald, EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

BODY:

LOS ANGELES -- Unlike some people he knows, Southern California's LenDale White doesn't require a police escort to get from the practice field to the locker room.

He never has won a Heisman Trophy, never has been compared to some hypothetical amalgam of Walter Payton and Gale Sayers, and never has been romantically linked to a pop starlet, either.

That's why kinetic running back Reggie Bush and photogenic quarterback Matt Leinart will enjoy top billing in the Trojans' blockbuster offense heading into Wednesday's Rose Bowl against Texas. And why White, the best backup tailback in America, is content to play a supporting role.

"I'm just glad to be in the same backfield with them," White said. "I never feel overshadowed at all."

Were it not for Bush -- who seems to appear on ESPN more than Chris Berman these days -- White undoubtedly would be a household name. He was a third-team All-American running back this season, despite being just second-team All-USC.

Even as a backup, White rates as one of the top rushers ever at a place known as "Tailback U."

He has posted back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons, the first for a Trojans' running back in nearly a quarter of a century. Only a junior, White ranks eighth on the school's all-time rushing chart at 3,053 yards, and he has scored a school-record 54 touchdowns.

This season, White rushed for 1,178 yards with an average of 6.7 yards per attempt. He logged 10 fewer carries than Bush but still ran for more touchdowns -- he had 21 to Bush's 15.

In short, White plays a mean third fiddle.

"When they need me, (I try) to stand up and compete," said White, who very nearly ended up selecting the Longhorns out of Denver's Chatfield High in 2003. "There are days when I can have 20 carries and 200 yards, and days when someone else will."

Against Oregon this season, White nearly did just that - running 19 times for 197 yards and a pair of TDs.

It was one of five 100-yard games for White this season.

No wonder UT coach Mack Brown spent a good part of a recent news conference offering an unprovoked ode to White.

"He's the story in this game that nobody's talking about," Brown said.

Lost in the lights San Antonio Express-News December 30, 2005 Friday

Make no mistake: They are talking about White in the UT locker room.

"He can start anywhere else in the nation," safety Michael Huff said. "We know we have to contain him when he's in the game, because he will line up and run over you."

The urge is to call White the thunder to Bush's lightning, but that's not entirely accurate. White is 6-foot-2 and 235 pounds and lives between the tackles, but he still has speed, shake and bake.

"Without him, this offense wouldn't be what it is," Bush said. "When he gets his chance, he makes plays."

Of course, you don't have to tell that to the guys in the UT coaching office. The Longhorns had him on campus for a visit in 2003.

"We knew he was good," Brown said. "Unfortunately, we were right about him."

White admits he once could have envisioned himself in burnt orange.

"Absolutely," White said. "If it wasn't USC, it was 100 percent Texas."

Instead, White chose USC. He does so now with no regrets. Even if he never needs a police escort.

"Here at SC, I've got two national championships under my belt," White said. "I've had a great time."

jmcDonald@express-news.net

GRAPHIC: USC's LenDale White has posted the Trojans' first back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons in nearly 25 years. He has a school-record 54 career TDs. **PHOTO:** KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOAD-DATE: January 3, 2006

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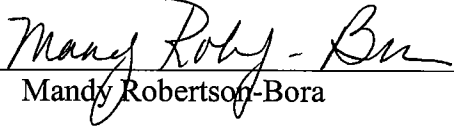
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